

# THE ORDER OF THE GOSPEL

Professed and Practised by the  
Churches of CHRIST  
IN

*New-England.*

Justified by the Scripture, and by the  
Writings of many Learned Men, and  
Ancient and Modern Divines.  
In Answer to several Questions re-  
lating to CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

By Increase Barber, President of Harvard  
Colledge in Cambridge, and Teacher of  
Church at Boston in New-England.

Jer. 2. 21, 36. I had planted thee a noble vine,  
wholly a right seed—why gaddest thou about  
much to change thy way?—  
Col. 2. 5. Joying and beholding your Order,  
the Steadfastness of your Faith.

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THE  
EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO THE  
Churches of Christ  
IN  
NEW-ENGLAND.

**T**HAT the Churches which are called *Reformed*, have attained unto but an *Imperfect Reformation*, is a Truth not to be denied: The defect has not been so much in *Doctrine* as in *Worship and Discipline*. Nevertheless, in this respect some Churches have gone beyond others. In *Geneva, France, Holland*, they have made an higher Progress then in *Germany*: of which the Chief Reformers, such as *Melancthon, Marry, Musculus, Zanchy*, and others were very sensible, bitterly complaining that many who were willing to cast off the yoke of *Antichrist*, yet were not willing to Subject to the Yoke of *Christ*. Amongst all the *Reformed Churches*, some have given the Preference to the *Bohemian-Brethren*, who sprang from the *Waldenses*, and they from the true *Apostolick Church* not corrupted with *Popery*. These did *Luther* in the year 1524 dislike, because of their *strict Ecclesiastical Discipline*. But twelve years after that, he saw cause to alter his Judgment, and wrote to

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Defence of those Holy Churches, which once he had written against, bewailing his own Error in that he had been so Lax in Admissions to the Lords Table, and wishing that the *Evangelics* in Germany, had began the *Reformation* with *Discipline*, and not with *Doctrine* only. For which change of his Judgment Popish Authors do unworthily upbraid him, since it was a change for the better. *Lasinius* (the Polish Historian) sayes, that if any where in the World the *Primitive Apostolical Churches* were to be seen, it was amongst the *Ecclesiola*, the poor little Churches of the *Bohemian Brethren*. When Learned *Bucer* heard one of their Ministers (who was sent on purpose into Germany for that end) give an account of the Order of their Churches, he burst out into Tears, saying to the other Divines Present, *This is Heaven upon Earth*. *Vergerius*, (that famous Preacher who having been the *Popes Legat* to the Emperor, taking *Calvins Institutions* into his hands with a design to confute him, was Converted thereby) wrote to an Eminent Person in those Churches that he Prayed for nothing in this world so much as that he might Live and Dye a member amongst them. Now that, wherein these Churches did chiefly Excel, was their Order Especially in their great strictness as to Admissions to the Lords Supper. It was in those days objected against them, *Fratres non habent Ecclesiam apertam*, that their Churches were enclosures, and their Church doors were too strait. But they knew that the Scripture calls the Church a Garden Enclosed, a Spring shut up, and a fountain Sealed Cant. 4. 12. They were wont to Answer such as made that objection against 'em, *Christ has taught us that we must not give Holy things, except to Holy Persons*. Religion (said they) is not to begin with the Sacrament, but with Repentance and Faith. And as Christ would not commit himself to all that Professed faith so neither must we. There are many that prove Abortive Christians, we must be as careful as we can, that we be not deceived with such Communicants. And therefore the Consciencies of such as Offer themselves to our Communion are to be searched into, and they must be tryed concerning their sincerity again and again; and Observation made what Fruits that are Evidences of true Repentance do appear in them. - This was the Doctrine: This was the Discipline of those famous Churches. Thus did they Practise for many

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III

ny years. But by reason of an *Universal Toleration*, and through *Corruption in their Schools*; they degenerated, and wonderfully lost their *Discipline*, until the *Jealousy of the Lord* dissipated and destroyed them all. A late writer observes, that for the space of *Forty years*, the *Reformed Churches in France* kept close to their *Ecclesiastical Discipline*, but after that they grew remiss. And what has God done to them all at this day? It was spoken to the Church in *Ephesus*, *Rev. 2. 4. 5.* *Thou hast left thy first Love Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and do the first works, or else I will go to thee quickly, and will remove the Candlestick out of his place.* The *Revelation* was written *Forty years* after the Church in *Ephesus* was first planted. The *First Generation* of Church Members in that time were doubtless the most of them dead: their Successors wanted the *First Zeal* for the ways of Christ wherein their Predecessors had Excelled. This at last issued in a Removal of the Candlestick.

And should not the dear Churches of *New-England*, be awakened by such awful Examples to take heed lest it be thus with them? And therefore to beware of *Declensions*, either from the *Faith* or from the *Order of the Gospel*. There is that which the Scripture call, the *present Truth*, in which in a special Manner we ought to be *Established*, *2 Pet. 1. 12. viz.* That which is very Peculiarly the Truth of the Age of the Place where the Divine Providence has cast our Lot. And this is *Now* the Truth which doth concern *Ecclesiastical Polity*. That is it, for which our Fathers suffered a *Voluntary Exile* into this Wilderness when it was a Land not Sown. Here God rewarded them with shewing to them the form of his House, with all the outgoings thereof, and all the comings in thereof. Mr. Brighman, before ever there was a *New-England*, Conjectured that there would be some faithful Servants of Christ in a *Wilderness*, unto whom he should make *Singular Discoveries of Truth*; which several Judicious Authors have Esteemed as a *Prophetical Passage* fulfilled in what has come to pass in this *American Desert*. However, The Truth which respect Church Order are they which these Churches above any other are concerned to maintain: And an *Apostasy* from them would in *New-England* be a greater Sin and Provocation to Christ, then in any Place in the whole world,

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*Regenwolsfus* in his *Ecclesiastical History* of the *Slavonian Churches*, relates that *Lucas Brugenfis*, (a Man famous for his Learning and Piety amongst the *Bohemians*,) was wont to say, that he did not so much dread all the Enemies and Persecutors whom they were continually endangered by, as he was afraid least remissness in their Holy Discipline would prove the ruin of their Churches. This Prediction was sadly verified. I pray God the like fate may never attend these Churches, in too many of which there is an amazing Relaxation of Discipline. Sure I am, that to depart from the Order of the Gospel established in these Churches in the dayes of our Fathers, and declared in the Platform of Discipline, is not the way to obtain such signal Divine protections as they were favoured with, *Isa.* 4. 5. If we Esouse such principals as these, Namely, That Churches are not to Enquire into the Regeneration of those whom they admit unto their Communion. That Admission to Sacraments is to be left wholly to the prudence and Conscience of the Minister. That Explicit Covenanting with God and with the Church is needless. That Persons not Qualified for Communion in special Ordinances shall Elect Pastors of Churches. That all Professed Christians have right to Baptism. That Brethren are to have no Voice in Ecclesiastical Councils. That the Essence of a Ministers call is not in the Election of the People, but in the Ceremony of Imposing hands. That Persons may be Established in the Pastoral Office without the Approbation of Neighbouring Churches or Elders; We then give away the whole Congregation cause at once, and a great part of the Presbyterian Discipline also. To begin a change in one of these Particulars without Decision of the Synod, would in other Churches of the Reformed be counted Presumptuous; but to design all or most of these Innovations at once, is certainly a bold Attempt. No longer since then May 27. 1697. no less then Thirty Ministers in this Province, did declare and subscribe it with their hands, That they were made sensible of the tendencies which there are amongst us towards Deviations from the good Order wherein our Churches have according to the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ, been happily established and continued. There is cause to be sensible of it now as much as then. For Deviations are not less then formerly, but rather growing upon us every day. Shall we then by silence

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betray the Truth? when the interest of Christ is concerned; do we not hear that voice, *Who is on the Lords Side? Who?* Is there no one that will stand up for the Churches of Christ? The Good People in them may then well think that their *Watchmen* are all either Dead or Asleep: For which cause it is, that I Dedicate this ensuing *Dissertation* unto you the Churches of Christ in New-England.

My Brethren, and the Lord's People,

It is not *my own Cause*, but *Yours* which I have here undertaken and plead for. Did I say *Yours*? Nay, it is *Christ's Cause*. The defence of these Truths is now become the Cause of Christ, and of his Churches in New England. I am also very sensible that *Young Divines*, who have not Studied these *Controversies*, are apt to think, that what has been Ordinarily professed and practised in the Churches of New-England, is *Novelty and Singularity*. It may in that respect be a Service to the Churches that something be written, which may be for the Information and Illumination of such, in Questions of this nature, by means whereof they may be the more fit to serve the Churches of God, wherever the Divine Providence shall see good to dispose of them.

*New-England* (I mean the Churches in it) was *Planted a Noble Vine wholly a right seed*. We are all concerned in our several Capacities (Ministers in theirs, and People in theirs) to Labour what in us lies, that they who shall come after us, may not prove *Degenerate Plants*; much more should we Endeavour that they may not be so in our Days. It is a sad Observation often verified by Experience, That Religion in the Purity and Power of it, seldom continues long in the same place. When the Church of Israel was in a Settled State, They served the Lord all the days of *Joshua*, and of the Elders that out-lived *Joshua*; that Generation was gathered to their Fathers, and there arose another Generation after them which knew not the Lord. They turned quickly out of the way which their Fathers walked in, obeying the Voice of the Lord, but they did not so. It was the Third Generation of Church Members, which proved Degenerate and Apostate: Pray God it be not so in New-England. The First Generation of his Ser-

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vants, whom he brought into this Wilderness, are gathered to their Fathers : And many of the *Second Generation*, such of of them as are yet living are now in years, and soon will be all gone. The *Third Generation* are coming to take their turn. Some of them are great Blessings to the Churches, as inheriting the Principles, Spirit, and Grace of their Fathers and Grand-Fathers, but many of them do not so. On which account, it is not at all to be wondred at, if they Dislike *the good Old way of the Churches* ; yea, if they Scoff at it, as some of them do ; or if they are willing to depart from *what is Ordinarily Practised in the Churches of Christ in New-England*. For the *Congregational Church Discipline*, is not suited for a *Worldly Interett*, or for a *Formal Generation of Professors*. It will stand or fall as *Godliness in the Power of it* does prevail or otherwise. That there is a great decay of the Power of Religion throughout all *New-England* is *Lamentably true*. If that revive, there will be no fear of *Departing* from the Holy Discipline of the Churches of Christ. But revived will it be amongst those who are *Enemies to Explicit Covenanting* with God and his People, against whom the *Religious Societies of the Church of England Communion*, now in *London*, will rise up and Condemn them. Was it ever known that *Collapsed Churches* were restored to their *Primitive State of Purity*, but in this way, and by this means of *Explicit Renovation* of their Covenants with God and with one another. But I hope enough is said about that in the subsequent *Disquisition*.

Let the Churches Pray for the Colledge particularly, that God may ever Bless that Society with faithful *Tutors* that will be true to Christ's Interest and theirs, and not Hanker after new and loose ways. This is a matter of no small concernment. For if the *Fountain* whose *Streams should make glad the City of God*, be corrupted, Posterity will be Endangered thereby. The poor Churches in *Bohemia* before-mentioned found it so. If the begun *Apostacy* should proceed as fast the next thirty years as it has done these last, surely it will come to that in *New-England* (Except the Gospel it self Depart with the Order of it) that the most Conscientious People therein, will think themselves concerned to gather Churches out of Churches. But as yet the *Declension* is not gone



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gone so far but a stop may be put thereunto, and the Interest of Religion be Retrieved. It was said to one of the decaying Churches in Asia, *Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to Die* ?---Remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast. Does not the Lord Jesus Christ say so to the Churches in New-England ? And does he not say, as unto another of the Churches, *Hold fast that thou hast, that no Man take thy Crown.*

The Lord give us Grace so to do, which is the Hearts Desire and Prayer, of him who is,

Boston, 17m.  
1700.

Yours to Serve You,

Increase Sather.

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THE  
Order of the CHURCHES  
IN  
New-England  
VINDICATED.

QUESTION I.

**W** Hether Particular Churches ought to consist  
of Saints and true Believers on Christ?

The Question is not *de facto*, whether there are not true Churches in whom there are many that are not Saints, but *de jure*, whether it ought to be so? and whether that Church is not Guilty of Sin, which does admit those into their Communion who are not in the Judgment of rational Charity true Believers on Christ. This being premised for the true stating of the Question, the Answer is Affirmative. And that for these amongst other Reasons:

1. There are Scripture predictions relating to the Times of the New-Testament, which intimate that Evangelical Churches shall consist of Holy Persons. It is foretold that the uncircumcised shall not Enter into God's Holy City, Isa. 52. 1. That the high way, the way into the Church, should be the way of Holiness. Isa. 35. 8. That the people should be all righteous, the branch of the Lords planting, the work of his

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*hands that He might be glorified. Isa. 60 21. That unsanctified persons should be kept out of the Spiritual Jerusalem, Rev. 21. 27.*

2. The Scripture informs us, that in Churches where the appointment of Christ was observed, it has been thus. As in *Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Colosse*. the Members of the Churches there were *Saints, faithful Brethren, Sanctified in Christ Jesus*.

3. A particular instituted Church is the House of God. That particular Church in *Ephesus* is said to be so. *1 Tim. 3. 15.* A (a) Learned and Eminent Divine has these Expressions. 'As (saith he) a vertuous civil Man does not like to have in his House uncivil Persons, so the most Holy God will not allow any to be in his Family that are unholy. As no Man can think well to have Swine in his House, or Dogs and Swine to come to board with the rest of the Family, so open Sinners have no allowance from God to be in his Household.

4. None that were legally unclean might enter into the Jewish Temple, *2 Chron. 23. 19. Acts 21. 28, 29.* Nor eat of the Passover and other Holy things, *Numb. 9. 6, 10, 11.* Now Evangelical Churches are the Lords Temple, *1 Cor. 3. 16, 17.* And *2 Cor. 6. 16.* And they have in them Sacred things, yea the Body and Blood of Christ; and therefore they who are Morally Unclean may not be admitted into them. The Ceremonial Holiness of the Jewish Church was Typical of that real Holiness which ought to be in Gospel Churches.

5. When it has been otherwise, the Lord has reprov'd them that have caused or permitted such abuses; as in the Church at *Corinth, Pergamus, Thyatira*, which are blamed for their suffering Ungodly Persons to be in their Communion, *1 Cor. 5. 2, 13. Rev. 2. 14, 15, 20.* A Scripture which has respect unto the Times of the Gospel, severely rebukes those Ministers which shall bring Men that are *Uncircumcised in Heart*, (Unregenerate Persons) into the Sanctuary, into the Church of God, to *Eat the Bread and Drink the Blood* which they that are there partake of, *Ezek. 44. 7, 9.*

6. Nothing can be more fatal to the Interest of Religion, than to constitute Churches of Unsanctified Members. This made way for the *Antichristian Apostacy*, which has been Subversive to the Interest of Christ and Holiness throughout the greatest part of that which bears the Name of *Christianity*. When Christianity became the State of Religion, whole Provinces at once were made Church Members, upon a bare Profession of Christianity, without any regard to their real Sanctity. And this corrupting the Church, as to the matter of it, was the means of introducing that corruption in Doctrine, Worship, Order, which soon followed. Of this some of the Ancients who lived in the fourth Century were very sensible, for we find in their Writings sad complaints about it. If we allow a Degeneracy in our Churches in respect of the matter of them, our *Bethels* will soon become *Bethavens*. It is a smart, but a true expression of a Great (b) Divine, That to compose Churches of habitual Sinners, and that either as to Sins of Commission or Sins of Omission, is not to Erect Temples to Christ, but Chappels to the Devil.

Nor is this Assertion, That Visible Saints are the matter of a particular Church a notion peculiar unto Congregational Men. Our Brethren of the Presbyterian Persuasion say the same thing. Yea, the good old Nonconformists, and all that have been Studious of Reformation in the Church concur in this Principle. Mr. Ball (c) who was of the Presbyterian Judgment, says, That all true Churches should consist of Visible Saints. The Nonconformists do acknowledge, that Churches planted and gathered according to God's Word consists of Saints only. Thus Mr. Ball. The Presbyterians of the Union in London, have it for one of their Articles, That none shall be Admitted as Members in order to Communion in all the special Ordinances of the Gospel, but such Persons as are Knowing and Sound in the Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion without Scandal in their Lives, and to a Judgment regulated by the Word of God, are Persons of Visible Godliness and Honesty, credibly professing cordial Subjection to Jesus Christ. Worthy Mr. Rutherford has these words, (†) Those only (says he) are to be admit-

(b) Dr. Owen of a Gospel Church, part 2. p. 4. (c) Answer to Cann. part 2. p. 49, 50. (†) Plea for the Presbytery in Scotland, p. 184.

and to the Supper of the Lord, whom in Charity, we Judge, can  
and do Try and Examine themselves, and rightly discern the  
Lords Body, and who in Faith can annuntiate the Lords Death.  
The Churches in New-England are free to admit those into  
their Communion who are thus qualified ; nor do they insist  
on more.

## QUESTION II.

*Whether there ought not to be a Trial of Persons concerning  
their Qualifications and Fitness for Church Communion  
before they are Admitted thereunto?*

The Answer may be given in three Assertions.

1. We Affirm that Examination and Tryal of the per-  
sons who offer themselves to our Sacred Communion, whe-  
ther they are duly qualified for it, is ordinarily necessary.

For,

1. If men professing and pretending to be Apostles were  
to be tried whether they were so indeed or no, then there is  
the like reason that Men pretending to be Saints, and so  
fit materials for Church Fellowship, should be tryed whether  
they were so or no. But the former is plain from *Rev. 2. 2.*  
Where such persons were tried and found to be but coun-  
terfeits.

2. In the Old Testament there were persons set at the  
Gates of the Temple to see who they were that did Essay to  
enter, and to keep those out that were not duly qualified.  
*2 Chron. 23. 19.* And shall the New Testament Temple, i.  
e. the Church of God, have no persons to Examine such as  
would enter thereinto? If Ceremonial uncleanness made  
Men unfit to enter into the Material Temple, Moral Un-  
cleanness renders them incapable of Admission into the  
Spiritual Temple. Wherefore an Examination is necessary.

3. It is said of the *Mystical Jerusalem* that Twelve An-  
gels were at her Gates, *Rev. 21. 12.* Which does not Ob-  
scurely intimate, that there are Officers in the Christian Church-  
es, whose work it is to observe who they are that Essay to  
enter thereinto, that so the worthy or duly qualified may  
be admitted and others be debarred from Entrance.

2. The

2. The tryal to be used should be such as may make it appear to the Judgment of rational Charity, that the persons be so qualified as all Church Members ought to be. It has been proved that *Church Members* ought to be *Believers, Saints, Regenerate* persons. And therefore the Church should put the persons who desire Admission into their Holy Communion, to declare and show whether it be thus with them, whether they have truly Repented of their Sins, and whether they truly Believe on Christ. Thus we read that *Philip* Examined the Eunuch whether he did believe on Christ with all his Heart or no, *Act. 8. 37.* And *John Baptist* put those whom he admitted to his Baptism to manifest their unfeigned Repentance, *Matth. 3. 2.*

Nevertheless,

3. A rigid Severity in Examination is to be avoided, and such tenderness and Charity ought to be used as that the weakest Christian if Sincere may be encouraged and gladly admitted. Yea it were better (as *Mr. Cotton* (*d*) observes) to admit diverse Hypocrites then to keep out one Sincere Child of God from coming into the Church.

For,

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ would not break the bruised Reed nor quench the Smoaking flax, *Matth 12. 20.* But gather the tender Lambs in his arms, and carry them gently in his bosome, *Isa. 40. 11.*

2. Such as are weak in the Faith we are Expressly Com-manded to receive. *Rom. 14. 1.* Receiving into Church fellowship may well ( amongst other things) be comprehended in that Expression.

3. Weak Christians if Sincere have the Substance of that Faith and Sanctity which is necessarily required in Church Members; and therefore no reason they should be Excluded, though others may Exceed them in measure and degree of Knowledge and Grace.

4. Church Communion and the Ordinances of God belonging thereto, being of special use for Confirmation and growth in Grace, such Christians that are the weakest have the



most need thereof, and therefore by no means should be Excluded therefrom. These Rules being observed; we affirm that Examination of persons to be admitted into Communion at the Lords Table is necessary. More arguments for it may be seen in Mr. Costons Excellent Treatise of the Holiness of Church-Members. And in this Controversy, those of the Presbyterian perswasion agree with the Congregational, as we see in their *Vindication of the Presbyterian Government* published by the Ministers at London in the year 1630. Wherein what we assert is largely proved by many Reasons, and the usual Objections against it, are solidly answered. In the primitive Times they were very strict in Examining those who were admitted into the Church Fellowship. The great *Chamier* wisteth that the like strictness were used in these days. *Origen* against *Celsus* (Lib. 3. p. Mibi. 142, 147, 148.) sayes, that in those dayes, Christians did initiate none but Converted ones in their Mysteries, and that they did all that possibly they could do, that their Churches might consist of none but such as were endued with Spiritual Wisdom, and that therefore they that joynd to them submitted to severe Examinations. This principal, That ungodly persons, are not fit to be admitted to the Lords Table, was asserted in the first dawning of the Reformation. Not only such as fell in with the Geneva Discipline, but the First Reformers in the Church of England went thus far. The Twenty ninth Article says, That in the use of the Lords Supper, such as are void of the Lively Faith, to their Condemnation Eat and Drink the Sign and Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Liturgy says, That in no wise men shou'd come but in the Marriage Garment. That if any man be in Malice, or in any grievous Crime, Let him not come to the Holy Table, but let him repent truly of his Sins past, and have a lively Faith in our Saviour Christ. Such Expressions as these are in the English Liturgy. A. B. Cranmer in his Answer to the Fifteenth Articles of the Downshire Rebels, having quoted many old Canons which require the people to Communicate and not the Priest alone. has these words, I would Exhort every Good Christian man often to receive the Holy Communion: yet I do not recite all these things to the intent that I would in this Corrupt World where men live so ungodly as they do, that the old



old Canons should be restored again, which Command every man present to receive the Communion with the Priest; which Canons if they were now used, I fear that men would receive it unworthily. See the Appendix to *Cranmers Life* lately published by Mr. Serype p. 96. As for that objection that the Sacrament is a *Converting Ordinance*, and therefore that there is no need of Examining Men about their Conversion in order to their being admitted to partake thereof, it is a Popish Assertion, Condemned and Confuted by our Divines, excepting that some of the grossest Lutherans have espoused it. Divers of our late Writers of the Presbyterian Judgment have Elaborately and Abundantly refuted that pernicious Error. Mr. Vines calls this Opinion an *Upstart Notion*: And says, He wonders that any should stand up in the defence of it since there is an army to a Man against them. See his *Treatise of the Lords Supper*, p. 215. Mr. Gillespy in his *Aarons Rod Blossoming*, Book 3. 12, 13, and 14. Chapters, does not only Answer Mr. Prins Allegations for the Affirmative, but he has by no less than Twenty Arguments with great Learning and Judgment demonstrated, that the Sacrament of the Supper is not a *Converting* but a *Confirming Ordinance*: otherwise it might be Administred not only to Ungodly but to Unbaptised persons. An Ordinance appointed for Conversion is not to be withheld from Unbaptised persons: But the Lords Supper is to be withheld from Unbaptised persons *Exod. 12. 48.* Therefore, &c.

### QUESTION III.

Whether are not the Brethren, and not the Elders of the Church only so Judge concerning the Qualifications and Fitness of those who are Admitted into their Communion?

Ans<sup>r</sup>. There is some difference of Apprehension, and yet no breach of Amity or Union, as to this Question between the Brethren of the Presbyterian and the Congregational way, the former giving this power only to the Eldership, the later joyning the Fraternity with them. (a) Mr. Cotton and from him Mr. Norton has Judiciously stated and discussed this

(c) In *Resp<sup>d</sup> ad Apollon*. p. 13.

Controversy. Let their and some other Arguments be duly weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary.

1. They that have power in Admission, have power to Judge whether the persons to be Admitted are duly qualified for Admission. But this is true of the *Fraternity* as well as of the *Presbytery*. No one can be Admitted into the Church by the Elders without the Consent of the Brethren. The Community is concerned in who are Admitted, and therefore should concur therein. Its a received maxim, *Quod tangit omnes, debet ab omnibus approbari*. And reason says, They that have power to Admit, have power to Judge whether the person who desire it, are fit for that Admittance.

2. They that have power to Judge whether a person is fit to be cast out of communion, have power to Judge whether he is fit to be received into Communion. The Key [ the power ] of Opening and Shutting belongs to the same persons. But it is clear from the Scripture, that the Brethren and not the Elders only have power to Judge whether an Offender is fit to be Excommunicated. *Matth. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 12.* All Orthodox Divines agree, that Church Discipline should be Exercised, *Consentiente plebe*. So amongst the Ancients, *Cyprian, Ambrose, Austen, Jerom, Chrysostom, Nazianzene, Theodoret, Theophylact*. And amongst our Modern Divines, *Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Melancton, Junius, Pareus, Rivet, Trelcatius*. If their consent is necessary, then they have power to Judge whether they ought to consent or no.

3. They that have power to Judge whether a person Excommunicated, is fit to be restored to the communion of the Church, have power to Judge whether persons never yet received into the Communion of the Church are duly qualified for that Communion. But the Apostle writes to the Brethren as well as to the Elders of the Church in *Corinth* to restore a penitent, whom they had according to the discipline of Christ laid under a Church censure, *2 Cor. 2. 6.* If the Brethren are competent Judges concerning the Repentance of a Lapsed Communicant, they are not incompetent Judges of the Repentance of other persons that may offer themselves to their Communion.

4. When *Saul* desired to joyn to the Church at *Jerusalem*, he was not admitted until the Brethren were by the Testimony of *Barnabas*, together with his own Declaration, satisfied concerning the reality of his Faith and Repentance. *Act.* 9. 26, 27.

5. If only Elders have power to Judge who are fit to come to the Sacrament or to joyn to the Church, then in case there is but one Elder in a Church ( as they are very few Churches in *New-England*, that have more Elders then one ) the Sole power will reside in that one Mans hands. Then by a parity of reason one alone would have power to suspend from Communion, which Judicious Presbyterians do not allow of. For the *London* Ministers in their Vindication of the Presbyterian Government, ( p. 76, 71. ) have these words. ' It is ( say they ) as warrantable by the word of God, for one Minister to assume unto himself alone the power of Suspending from the Sacrament, as it is to assume the whole power of admitting to the Sacrament, for contrariorum eadem est ratio: For one Minister alone to assume this power to himself, is to make himself a Congregational Pope. It is a bringing into the Church a power that would have some resemblance to Auricular Confession. Thus said the Presbyterians Fifty years ago.

6. The way to keep Popery out of the World, is for the Fraternity in Churches to assert and maintain that power and privilege, which does of right belong to them. Certain it is, that in the first Ages of Christianity this power which we plead for, was not taken out of the hands of the Brotherhood. One of the Ancients, whose writings give us the greatest insight, into what was the general practice of the Churches, in the *Third Century* makes his past dispute. In (f) one of his Epistles he has these words, *Examinabuntur singula presentibus & judicantibus vobis.* And in another. *Vix plebi persuadeo at tales patientur admitti.* That he had much ado to persuade the people to be satisfied with the Repentance and Qualifications of some that desired a Reception or Restoration to their Communion. When in after times Church Members thought with themselves, our Mi-

(f) *Cyrian. Epist.* 40.

nisters understand Church Affairs better than we do, therefore we will unconcern our selves, and leave all to their *Conscience and Prudence*: this very thing (as some Learned Men have observed) was that which made way for the rise of Popery. It may be it will be for the Edification of some Readers, if we recite some passages out of our famous Dr. *Owen*. In his Judicious (g) Treatise of Evangelical Churches. He has these words, 'Dr. *Stillingsfleet* denies unto the people all Liberty or Ability to chuse their own Pastors, to judge what is meet for their own Edification, what is Heresy, or a pernicious Error, and what is not, or any thing of the like nature. This is almost the same with that of the Pharisees, concerning them who admired and followed the Doctrine of our Saviour, *Joh. 7. 49. This people which know not the Law: yet was it this people*, whom the Apostle directed to choole out from among themselves persons meet for an Evangelical Office, *Act. 6. The same People* who joynd with the Apostles and Elders in the consideration of the Grand case concerning the continuation of the Legal Ceremonies, and were associates with them in the determination of it. *Act. 15. The same* to whom all the Apostolical Epistles, Excepting some to particular persons, were written And unto whom such directions were given and duties Enjoynd in them, as supposed not only Liberty and Ability to judge for themselves in all matters of Faith and Obedience but also an especial Interest in the Order and Discipline of the Church, those who were to say to *Archippus* their Bishop, *take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it, Col. 4. 17.* Unto whom of all sorts it is Commanded that they should Examine and Try *Antichrists, Spirits, and false Teachers*, that in all sorts of Hereticks, Heresies, and Errors. *1 Joh. chap. 2. 3. &c.* That people who even in following Ages adhered unto the Faith and the Orthodox profession of it, when almost all the Bishops were became Arian Hereticks. This principle of the Reformation in Vindication of the Rights, Liberties and Priviledges of the Christian People to judge and choose for themselves in matters of Religion, to joyne

freely in those Church Duties which are required of them, without which the work of it had never been carryed on, we do abide by and maintain. Yea, we meet with no Opposition more fierce than upon the account of our Asserting the Liberties and Rights of the People in reference unto Church Order and Worship. But I shall not be afraid to say, that as the Reformation was begun and carried on, on this principle: So when *this People* shall through an apprehension of their Ignorance, Weakness, and *Unmeetsness* to judge in matters of Religion, for themselves, and their own duty, be kept and debarred from it; or when through their own sloath, negligence, and viciousness, they shall be really incapable to manage their own Interest in Church Affairs, as being fit only to be Governed if not as *Brute* Creatures, yet as *Mute* persons, and that these things are improved by the Ambition of the *Clergy*, *ingrossing all things in the Church to themselves*, as they did in former Ages, if the *Old Popedom* do not return, a *New one* will be Erected as bad as the other. Thus far Dr. Owen.

#### QUESTION. IV.

*Whether is it necessary that persons at their Admission into the Church, should make a publick Relation of the Time and Manner of their Conversion?*

*Ans.* 1. As the *Question* is worded, the Answer must be *Negative*. Nor do the Churches of *New-England* impose this: nor ought this to be required or desired of every one that joyns to our Communion.

For,

1. Some truly Converted one know neither the Time nor the Manner of their Conversion. It is often so with those that have been Advantaged with a Religious Education, and that have been all their days kept from falling into Scandalous Sins. The Spirit of God changeth their Hearts gradually and insensibly. as Mr. *Hooker* and other practical Divines have shewn. I have (*b*) else-where noted what Mr. *Baxter*

(*b*) In the preface to Mr. *Mitchels* Life.



relates concerning a considerable number of Eminent Christians who being met together on other accounts, it was proposed whether they could all give an account of the Exact Time of their Conversion; and there was but one of them all that could do it.

2. The natural Tempers and Infirmities of some are such, as make them incapable of relating publick what God has done for them. Some have a natural Hesitancy of speech. Others are of very bashful Tempers. Others are of such weak Intellectuals as that they can scarce speak sense. To put such upon *Publick Declarations* of their Experiences, would be to expose Sacred things to be Contemned and Ridiculed by Men of profane Spirits.

3. It is possible that the Occasion of a Mans Conversion may have been something not fit to be publicly related. It may be the words of some persecuted Saint who is in obscurity. It may be some signal Judgment on some of his Relations. Nay, it may be some Secret Sin which himself has been guilty of, may have so wounded his Conscience, as to occasion his true Repentance for all his other Sins: but this he ought not to tell the World of.

4. I am the more slow to pronounce the practice in Question to be *Absolutely necessary*, for that Good and wise Men have not been satisfied neither with the necessity nor yet with the Expediency of it. True it is, that the reason of that Opposition against it which is in the minds of some, proceeds from their own want of Experience. The *American Apostle*, (as Mr. Baxter calls him) good old Mr. Eliot, who was very Zealous for publick Relations, has sometimes told us of a Man that Joyned himself to the Church in Roxbury, who had been a very bitter Enemy to this Holy practice of the Churches in New-England, until the Lord changed his heart: And then when he offered himself to the Communion of the Church, he began his publick Relation after this manner. *It may be it will be wondered at that I who have been such an Enemy to these Relations and have so often inveighed against that practice of the Churches, should now be willing myself to relate what impressions the Word and Spirit of God has made upon me. I must Confess, that when I was against that Practice, the true reason was, because I had nothing to*  
say;

say; but it has pleased the Lord to Open my eyes, and to Change my heart: and now I am willing to Declare unto all you that fear the Lord, what God has done for my Soul. After this manner did that Converted Man Express himself. Yet nevertheless, some who have had Experience of the Regenerating Grace of God in their own Souls, have not thought it necessary, to declare this Publickly, when they joyn in Church fellowship, I remember my Worthy Friend and Ancient acquaintance, the Reverend and Learned Mr. John How ( who was Pastor of a Congregational Church in great Torrington in Devonshire, where I was his Successor in the work of the Ministry forty years ago ) informed me of one in that Church, who had been very averse to make a Relation of his Experiences, as supposing there was no Rule in Scripture obliging all that joyned to the Church so to practice: But at last he yielded to the Importunity of them that desired it from him; and made such a Relation of the work of God on his Soul, that ( as Mr. How assured me ) there was not one Man in all the Church that had dry Eyes at the hearing of it. These things considered, we shall readily concede unto those who are Scrupulous about Relations, that *A Formal Relation is not absolutely necessary* in order to Admission into Church Fellowship.

Nevertheless.

*Ans. 2.* The practice of the Churches in New-England as to this particular, is Lawful, Laudable, and Edifying. is Lawful for Churches to desire those that offer themselves to their Holy Fellowship, to give an account of their Faith and Repentance: And when the Church desires it, no capable person ought to refuse it.

For.

1. There is Scripture warrant for this practice, David says, *I have not hid my Righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy Faithfulness and thy Salvation, I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy Truth from the great Congregation.* Psal. 40. 10. And in another place he says, *Come and hear all you that fear God, and I will declare what he has done for my Soul.* Psal. 66. 16. These Expressions show that a Christian should be willing upon just occasion, to declare the Goodness and Gracious workings of God upon his Soul, and this too in the Assembly and Congregation of his People.



Now if a Church does desire it, that's a just occasion for the doing of it: and therefore it then ought to be done. Moreover, the Scripture says, that Christians should be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them to every one that asketh. 1 Pet. 3. 15. This Expression of *A reason of their hope*, shews that they must not only declare what good things they hoped-for in this or in another world, but also upon what grounds they did so hope. For else they might shew their hope, but not the *Reason* of their hope. Now if a Man has Experienced a work of Saving Conversion causing him to accept of Christ on the terms of the Gospel, he has sufficient Ground and *Reason* for Hope. Eph. 1. 18. Heb. 11. 1. But without that he has no reason to hope but the contrary, Ephes. 2. 12. Therefore he that declares the reason of his hope, must declare his Faith and Regeneration. If the Apostle does specially intend that Christians should be ready to do this before Persecutors, who would probably be offended with them for it, they should be ready to do this before a Church of Christ who will not be offended with them, but <sup>praise</sup> bless God for what they shall bear. The Presbyterian (i) Ministers of London say well, whose words are these, *If Christians are bound to give an account of their Faith and hope to every one that asketh, yea even to Heathen Persecutors; how much more ought they to do it to the Officer of the Church? especially at such a Time when they desired to be admitted to such an ordinance as is not common to all sorts of Christians.* I add, And how much more to a whole Church of Christ, If they ask it? There are also Scripture Examples to encourage this Holy practice. They who were admitted to Johns Baptism, made an Open Declaration of their Conversion. Matth. 3. 6. And these Converts in Act. 2. did manifest that serious desires were wrought in their Souls to be delivered from their Sins, which lay upon their Consciences and pricked their hearts, and that they gladly received the word of promise. If this was publicly manifested by them before their Admittance to Baptism; why should not the like be done now by Christians before their Admission to the Lords Table? It also recorded concerning the Converted Ephesians, that they not only believed, but *Came and*

(i) *Vindication of Presbyterian Government.* p. 67.

*Confessed, Act. 19. 18.* which implies *A Public Declaration of their Conversion.* And we find that the Apostle *Paul* was ready upon all just occasions to relate the story of his Conversion. This does warrant Christians now to practice the like on just occasions. And consequently when a Church of Christ shall call for it. The great *Austin* in his Book of Confessions, relates the story of his Conversion: The like we find in the published lives of many Saints. *Justin Martyr* in his disputation with *Tryphon* the Jew giveth a Marvellous account of his Conversion, by means of a Reverend old Man, that advised him to read the Scriptures and to pray to God for illumination, and then departed out of his sight.

2. It is necessary that Churches should know that those whom they admit to their Communion are duely qualified for that Communion. That they have in them (so far as Men are able to judge) that which is the matter of Self-Examination, viz. *Faith* and *Repentance*. That they have an ability to Examine themselves, and not only Doctrinally but Spiritually to discern the Lords Body, 1 Cor. 11. 28. 29. Now one way for the Church to know that they are such, is, by a Relation of Experiences. Nor can it be known except by a Relation, or that which shall be Equivalent thereunto; as our worthy (k) Mr. *Mitchel* has Evinc'd.

3. This practice of our Churches has a tendency to promote Godliness in the Power of it. I bless the Lord, in that there are at this day in London, several Religious Societies of the Communion of the Church of England, whose design is to promote Religion in the Power of it. Now these Societies required of such as joyn to them, that they give the Society a Solemn account of their sense of Spiritual things, which they do sometimes Orally and sometimes in writing. One that has perused some of their Papers, Reports that they have in them such Pious and sensible Expressions as would mightily affect any Pious Person to read them. But of this I have made a more large Recitation in a lately (l) published Epistle. Now since this practice has a tendency to promote Godliness, why should it not be continued in our Churches?

(k) See his Life. p. 84.

(l) See my Epistle before Mr. Willards Sermons on 2 Tim. 3. 5.

If the Reformers in the Church of England, require a Solemn account of their sense of Spiritual things of those that are Admitted into their Religious Societies, why may not we require the like of them that joyn to our Churches, which are Religious Societies?

4. This practice has been and will be attended with blessed effects. For,

1. It will cause the Name of God to be glorified. The Church that Heareth a Savoury Relation from any that present themselves to their Communion, will praise God for his Grace in them. Gal. 1. 24.

2. The Lords people will have Joy and Comfort in such Members being added to them. It Paul and Barnabas did cause great joy to the Brethren by declaring the Conversion of others. Act. 15. 3. That Christian will cause great joy to a whole Church of Christ, that shall relate to them, the Experience which he has had of the Grace of God in his own Conversion. It is good to be a helper and not an hinderer of the joy of Saints, 2 Cor. 1. 24.

3. The person that does thus joyn himself to the Lords People, will have more of their Love and Affection than could otherwise be expected. When they perceive what Experience he has had of the Converting grace of God in his Soul, every one that is Godly will Love him, and their Hearts will be United to him. 1 Joh. 5. 1. I Appeal to the Children of God if they do not find it thus. If when they hear any person make a very Experimental Relation of Gods dealings with them, in Convincing them of their misery by Nature, and bringing them to cast themselves upon Christ, and helping them against special Temptations, they do not find in their hearts a Singular Love and Holy Affection toward such persons ever after that day. From such Considerations as these mentioned, the practice of the Churches of New-England respecting the matter in Question is to be Justified, and I pray God, that it may be with due Solemnity continued. That some of our Presbyterian Brethren require that which is equivalent to what is with us called a Publick Relation, of those whom they admit to the Lords Supper, is to be seen by a Discourse, called, *The Young Mans claim to the Sacraments*. Written by my worthy Friend Mr. John Quick, a Reverend Minister now in London. I shall only add, that care is to be

be taken, Lest this custom of the Churches *degenerate into a meer Formality*. Not only things in themselves Lawful and Good, but the Holy Institutions of Christ, have through the Malice of Satan and the Corruptions of Men, been turned into *Formalities*. So are Church-officers, Sacraments and Church-censures in the *Church of Rome*, and in some Protestant Churches also; which are not thoroughly cleansed from the Romish Superstitions. Our *Customary Relations* may and will be so too, if we be not careful to prevent it. Insipid, Suplefs *Relations* which are used only *Pro forma*, will not Edify; but give Scandal, and Prejudice many against this Laudable Practice. There are Reports, as if some Churches, Persons have brought *written Relations* first to the Minister, and then to the Church, which were not their own dictating, but devised by others for them. I hope these Reports have nothing of Truth in them, but if they have, I am sure that such *Lyars to the Holy Ghost*, have exceedingly provoked the Lord.

## QUESTION. V.

**HAS** the Church Covenant as Commonly practised in the Churches of New-England, any Scripture Foundation?

*Ans.* This Question was Considered at a General Convention of Ministers at Boston, May 26. 1698. And all the Ministers then present (one only excepted) did concur in the *Affirmative*. The Reasons to prove that this Practice of our Churches is not an humane Invention, but grounded on the Word of God, are such as these.

1. Nothing is more Indisputable then that under the Old Testament, the Church was Constituted by a Covenant. Nor was any Proselyte admitted into that Church, but by laying hold of the Covenant. A Proselyte was *Filius faderis*, a Son of the Covenant. The Jews were *Unchurched* by being *Dis-covenanted*. Zech. 11. 10. Things abundantly insisted on in the Old Testament, are more sparingly mentioned in the New. Such as the Sanctification of the Sabbath, and the Church state of the Infant Children of the Lords People. The like may be said as to the Church Covenant. Several Eminent Divines have given  
this

## The Order of the Churches

this reason why the Word *Covenant* is not mentioned by the Apostles, when they speak of the particular Churches. *viz.* Because it is founded on moral Equity, and often mentioned in the Old Testament. Moreover (as is noted by a Learned Author) the name *Covenant* and *Covenanting*, was that which would have made the Churches in those days Obnoxious to the Civil Powers, who were then Enemies to Christianity. Therefore the Apostles did forbear the Names, but Established the *Thing* by Similitudes evidently implying it.

2. Scriptures which relate to Gospel Times, intimate such a Covenant as is used in our Churches. *Isa.* 62. 5. 'Tis said of the Church, *Thy Son shall Marry thee*, which implies a Covenant. Thus *Isa.* 44. 5. *One shall say I am the Lord, and another shall Subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and Surname himself by the name of Israel.* This is Explicit Covenanting, to be in Gospel Times. So *Isa.* 56. 4. *They that chuse the things that please me, and take hold of my Covenant.*

3. Members in particular Evangelical Churches are said to be *Fellow Citizens*. *Eph.* 2. 19. Now there is no Admission in *jus Civitatis*, or City priviledges, but by an Act which implies a Covenant. Citizens are in a Covenant together to keep the Laws, and maintain the Liberty of the City.

4. A Church, when Collapsed, is restored by a *Renovation* of their Church Covenant with God and with one another: Of which we have Instances in the Scripture. *2 Chron.* 23. 16. and 29. 9, 10. and 34. 31, 32. *Ezra.* 10. 3, 5. *Neh.* 10. 29. Now there is the same reason of *Restitution*, as of *Institution*.

5. Nothing else can be mentioned as Constituting a Particular Church, but only a *Covenant*, *Agreement*, or *Consent* to walk with God and one another according to the Rules of the Gospel. *Meer Cohabitations* does not make a Church Member, for then Jews and Pagans would be Members of Evangelical Churches. Nor does Profession do it, for then it would be impossible to cut off Scandalous Members by *Excommunication*. Nor *Baptism*: For then upon the ceasing of Membership in a Particular Church, a Man must be re-baptised.

6. There

6. There are Scriptures in the New-Testament which imply such a Covenant, as that which we plead for. *Act. 2. 42. They Continued*, The Greek word signifies, *They joyned and Cleaved together*. So *Acts 5. 13.* None durst *Joyn themselves*, i. e. give themselves to the Church; they were afraid of being Married to the Church. The word is the same with that *Matth. 19. 6.* It is in respect of the Covenant (as Dr. Goodwin (m) observes) that they who are Conjugaally related, are said to be joyned together.

7. If *Implicit Covenanting* is absolutely necessary to the being of a particular Church, then *Explicit Covenanting* must needs be a good thing. The more Explicit men are in Confessing Christ, and owning his Institutions, the more do they Glorify him. *Matth. 10. 33. Mark 8. 39.* There is (as Mr. (n) Stone the famous Teacher of Hartford has observed) much of the *Visible Glory of Christ* appearing in the *Explicitness of the Church Covenant*, when men visibly bind themselves and their Children to Christ. That *Explicit Covenanting* was practised among Christians in the next ages to the Apostles, is Evident from *Pliny* (who lived Anno 110) his Letter to the Emperor *Trajan*. Having Enquired into what was *Customary in Christian Assemblies*, He says that they did meet to Worship Christ, and that they did by an Oath bind themselves to attend the *Discipline*, that they would not allow of Adulteries, Thefts, Lying, or any Evil thing to be among them. We see in *Justin Martyr*, his *Second Apology* (who lived within fifty Years of some of the Apostles) that Christians were in those Days admitted into Church Fellowship, declared their Resolution in all things to Conform to the Word of God. They did not only profess their belief of the Christian Religion, but promised to live accordingly. *Apol. 2. p. 93, 94. Tertullian* (o) in his *Apology* speaking of *Plinies Letter* but now cited, Expresseth the Practice of those Primitive Christians, by saying that they met together *ad Considerandam Disciplinam*, which shows that they had both a *Discipline* and a *Covenant* amongst them and clearly Explains the meaning of *Plinies Sacrament or Oath*, which he affirms

(m) In his 4th. Volum.

(n) In his Answer to Mr Hudson. p. 41.

(o) Cap. 2. p. (Mithi) 13.



to be Practised in the Christian Assemblies. *Comenius* (p) informs us, that in the *Bohemian Churches*, such as were admitted to full Communion, made a publick profession of their Faith before the whole Church, withal promising to live according to the rules of the Gospel. In the beginning of *Queen Elizabeth's* Reign, several Congregations in *England*, particularly those in *Coventry*, and in *Northampton*, did publickly profess Repentance for their Idolatry, and Promised Obedience to the Protestant Doctrine then restored and established; which *Mr. Robinson* in his Answer to *Mr. Bernard*, p. 464. Supposeth to be the deed not of the whole Congregations, but of some Ministers, a few of their people joyning with them. There are some who say that *Presbyterians* are against *Explicit Covenanting*. My design is to vindicate them as well as their *Congregational Brethren*. And I must therefore say, that such an Imputation to them all, is an injurious Reflection. Both the one and the other acknowledge that *Explicit Covenanting* is not *Essential* to the being of a *Particular Church*. Nevertheless, that it is very useful to the *benefit* thereof, for the more effectual Management of Discipline, and preservation of Order in the Churches, which renders it a duty. *Dr. Hornbeck* (a Learned professor in the University of *Leyden*, who has written in Defence of the Presbyterian Government) (†) declares his approbation of the practice of Congregational Churches as to that of *Explicit Covenanting*, and that he approveth of what *Mr. Cotton*, *Mr. Richard Mather*, and *Mr. Norton*, (all of *New-England*) have published on that Subject. The Churches in *Holland* are under the Presbyterian form of Government. It is certain that they did many years since require *Explicit Covenanting* both with God and with the Church, by those that were admitted into the Communion. *Zeperus* who himself was one of them, writes that their manner and order, is, (q) That when any person are admitted to the Lords Table, they make a Publick Profession of their Faith before all the Church, and likewise promise and Covenant that they will continue in that Faith, and lead their Lives accordingly. This personal

(p) *Histor.* p. 46. & in ordin. p. 43. 46.

(†) *Epist. ad Dureum.* p. 309, 310.

(q) *Zepper. de polit. Eccles.* L. 1. c. 14.



Covenanting with God and the Church is required by several of the Synods in Holland, and is highly approved of by the most Learned Voetius in his Books of (r) Ecclesiastical Polity. An Episcopalian near upon an hundred years since, complained, that the Calvinists and Reformed Churches in France would not admit any one unto the Lords Table, except he did make a Publick Profession of his Faith, and did also Promise by the help of God to continue stedfast therein. Our Renowned Mr. Robert Parker, (who being driven out of England by the then Persecuting Prelates, lived amongst the Reformed Churches abroad) acquaints us that in those Churches, *When any person seeks Admittance into Church Communion, the Name of him who desires to be a Church Member is Published in the Congregation, that if any one has ought to Object against the Person Propounded, he should acquaint the Elders therewith. If nothing is brought in against him, he is admitted, but not without a Solemn Covenant with God and the Church; and to the Church he promiseth, to walk as becomes that Holy Fellowship, that he would submit to the Discipline of the Church, that he will watch over the Brethren of that Communion according to the command of Christ.* If (saith Mr. Parker) (s) this were practised in the Church of England, there would be no cause for A. B. Whitgift to say, that the Visible Church is full of Idolaters, Adulterers, Drunkards, and Atheists. That none were admitted to be Members of Particular Churches amongst the Reformed in (t) France without Publick Covenanting or Promising Subjection to the Discipline of Christ, is well known. Now let us hear what a later Presbyterian says about an Explicit Church Covenant: The Reverend Mr. Baxter in his Book called Church Concord (u) declares, that there is no difference at all between the Learned of both persuasions. (*Viz.* Presbyterian and Congregational) about this controversy. *The thing (says he) that the Presbyterians have stood upon it no more but to Vindicate the Truth of our Churches against the Separatists, that have denied them to be*

(q) Histor. p. 46. & in rat ordin. p. 43. 46.

(r) Part 1. lib. 1. c. 4.

(s) De pol Eccles. L. 3. c. 16. p. 171, 172.

(t) See Mr. Quicks Synodicon. An. 1565. p. 61.

(u) P. 20, 21.

true Churches, because they have not an *Explicite Covenant*. They deny not but that such a Covenant may conduce to the well being of the Church. And he adds further; I conclude that whatsoever some Particular Person may be Guilty of, there is no real difference between the Presbyterians and Independants in the point of Church Covenant. God forbid, that any faithful Minister of Christ should fight against that which is profitable to the well being of the Church, meerly because without it the Church may have a being. Then must we plead for hunger and want, and calamitous diseases that leave us but the being of Men, Nature, and Scripture, and the Presidents in the Old Testament, and the Doctrine of the Apostles, and the Ancient practice of the Churches do satisfy us of the usefulness of Holy Covenants, prudently, seriously, and seasonably made. Thus Mr. Baxter who has much more to the same purpose in his Book of Confirmation.

## QUESTION. VI.

**I**S Publick Reading of the Scriptures without any Explication or Exhortation therewith, part of the work incumbent on a Minister of the Gospel?

*Ans.* The Question is not whether such Readings are Lawful, (for who doubts that) but whether the Minister that shall omit them, does fail in that which is some part of his duty. To which the Answer must be *Negative*. It cannot be proved that that which some call *Dumb Reading*, or publick Reading of the Scripture without any Explication or Exhortations is part of the Pastoral Office, or that which every Minister of the Gospel is bound unto. Some have thought (w) that when Paul says to Timothy, *Till I come give attendance to Reading*, that he means Publick Reading of the Scripture; but then he adds, *and to Exhortation and Doctrine*. 1 Tim. 4. 13. The Reading of one Chapter with a brief Explication, will Edify the Congregation more than the bare Reading of Twenty Chapters will do. And Every Minister should attend that which will be most to the Edification

(w) *V. Dido, clav. p. 633. And Aynsworth against Smith, p. 44.*

of his People. If publick Reading without Explication or Exhortation therewith is a duty, then those Ministers who when they Read publickly do always Expound or Exhort therewith, but do not practice that which is called *Dumb Reading*, are guilty of Sin, as omitting that which is their duty. But such Ministers are not guilty of Sin: And if not, it will then follow, that they who practice Reading without Explication under the notion of a duty, are guilty of Superstition, in making that a duty which is none. As for Reading without Interpretation, there are many who can do that as well as the Minister. We find in *Neb. 8. 8.* *That they read in the Book of the Law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the Reading.* That the Jews were wont to Read the Scriptures in their Synagogues every Sabbath day, we all know. The *Penteteuch* (or five Books of Moses) was by them divided into fifty four *Parashoth*, or *Sections*, which they read over once every year. When *Antiochus* inhibited the Reading of the Law, the Jews Instead thereof Read the Prophets; after which it became customary to Read both of them. The Jews called the Lecti<sup>o</sup>ns out of the Prophets, *Haphtharot*, which Signifies *Dismission*, because they were wont to dismiss their Assemblies with those Readings. But that *Explications* and *Exhortations* used to attend their Readings is certain. It belonged to him that was the chief Ruler of the Synagogue to see this done, who did sometimes permit others to do it. The chief Man in the Synagogue was by the Jews called *Chazzan*, i. e. the Inspector, or Overseer, and sometimes they called him *Sheliach Tfibbor*, i. e. The Angel of the Congregation. The work of this person was to go before the Congregation in prayer. And although he did seldom read himself, he appointed others to do it, making his choice of Seven, and diligently observed how they read. This Overseer of the Synagogue, or some other person used to Interpret what was read. On this very account, the Synagogue was called, *Beth Midrash*, i. e. The House of Exposition. See Mr. *Weems Exercitation.* 15. p. 163. Where he shows that it was the manner of the Jews after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, to Expound. Besides what Writers on this Subject inform us, the thing is clear from these Scriptures. 2 Chron 17. 9. Luk.

4. 16.—22. *48.* 13. 15. and 15. 21. It cannot be proved that Reading without *Explication*, or *Application* was used by the Pastors in the Churches of Christians in *Apostolical* Times, nor yet in the next Ages to them. We see in *Justin Martyr*, that the Scriptures were then Read, but a Sermon thereon followed. In *Cyprians* (x) Time there was a Reader distinct from the *Presbyter*, who was Ordained to that Office. He is by *Cyprian* called *Doctor Audientium*, (which as the most Learned Professor of *Utrick* has Observed) implies that he did more than barely Read. In *Austins* time, they used to have three *Lectiōs*. They read an *Epistle*, and sometimes out of the *Gospel*, and a *Psalm*, after which the Minister Preached upon what was read. Therefore *Austin* begins some of his sermon with saying, *Tres has Lectiōes, &c. These three Readings which you have heard, &c.* When the distinction of *Libri proto-Canonici* & *deutero-canonici* was received, the Reading of the Scriptures in Publick Congregations brought in the Reading of *Apocrypha-Books*, (and at last the Reading of *Homilies* instead of Preaching) which is still practised in *Popish*, and in some Protestant Congregations, notwithstanding there is in the Council of *Laodicea* a Canon against it. From these and the like Considerations, Publick Readings of the Scriptures, unless with some *Exposition* thereon, was not practised in the Churches of *New-England* by those Eminent Servants of Christ, who first planted Churches in this Wilderness. Mr. *Rutherford* in his account of the Government of the Church of *Scotland*, under that head of *The Pastors Duty*. (p. 314.) mentions reading Scriptures with Exposition, but says nothing of reading without that. I am informed that there are Congregations in *Scotland*, where not the Pastor, but the Ruling Elder readeth the Scripture. Mr. *Calderwood*, (that Learned Scotch Divine who goes under the name of *Didoclavus*) says, that he would not have Sermons without reading the Scriptures, nor reading without Interpretation. *Non probo Lectiōem sine Interpretatione. Altare Damascen.* p. 632. In some (y) Congregations in *Germany*, the Scriptures have been read in or-

(x) *V. Cyprian Epist.* 24. & 34.

(y) *V. Voet. de pol. Eccles.* part 1. lib. 2. p. 605.

der, and illustrated with a brief and pious Explication. In the *Tigurin Liturgy*, there is no mention of Reading without Interpretation. I therefore suppose that there is no such practice in the *Helvetian Churches*. I knew an Eminent Minister in *England*, who did for many years read the Scriptures in the publick Congregation, without any Explication, but in his latter Time he saw cause to alter his Judgment and practice therein, always joyning Interpretation with his Reading. The *Bishop of Derry* in his late discourse of *Humane Inventions in the worship of God*, makes a sad complaint, that the *Nonconformist* dont use to read the Scriptures in their Assemblies. He says, that in all the Meetings in the North of Ireland, in a whole year, there is not so much Scripture read as in one day in the Church. Sure it is a sad thing (says he) that a Man may go to most Meetings many years, and never hear one entire Chapter read in them. Mr. *Boys* Answers him, that it is the general practice of the Ministers in the North of Ireland, (the Ministers there are general of the Scotch Nation, and of the Presbyterian Judgment) to read every Morning an entire portion of Scripture, usually a whole Chapter, or at least so much as they can go through with, in an Exposition of half an hours length. Now let us suppose there are Forty Meetings in the North of Ireland, and that in each Meeting half a Chapter is read every Lords-day, for three quarters of the year, by this Computation, there will be near 800 Chapters read in these Meetings in a year. But will the Bishop perswade us, that there is as much read in one day in the Parish Church. Mr. *Boys* moreover says, that there are few Sermons of the *Dissenters* in which there is not as much of the Scriptures recited to the people as if put together would make up two or three Chapters. And that the *Dissenters* have better reason to blame the *Conforming Clergy* for casting out the Exposition of Scripture when read (as that Exercise is distinguished from Sermons) then the Bishop to reproach them for not reading the Scripture. And that those more fully comply with Gods Command, who read and Expound, than those that only read. He takes notice what a miserable sort of Clergy there is in *Russia* and other parts of the Christian World, where their Ministers are meer Readers. Thus Mr. *Boys* a worthy

Minister of the Presbyterian Judgment in *Dublin*, whom I have the rather taken notice of, because he was born in *New-England*, at *Rowley*, in which Church his Father (a Man of Eminent piety) was an Officer. To conclude the answer to the Question before us: It is evident, that in *Origen's* time, Interpretation of the Scripture did accompany the publick Reading of it, For he calls their Sermons, *Diageseis*. (†) the enarrations or *Explications* of what had been Read. *Origen* was wont himself to read several Chapters. We find that he read the 25, 26, 27, 28. Chapters of the First Book of *Samuel* at one time, but deferred the Exposition of the last of those Chapters to another Opportunity. At another time he read in *Jeremiah* from Verse 10. of Chapter 15. to Verse 5, of Chapter 17. and spent an hour (as he was wont to do) in Explaining and Applying what he had read. As for those who are of the Bishops mind, that many Presbyterians as well as Congregational Men are guilty of Sin, and *Humane Invention in the worship of God*, in that they always add Explication or Application to what they read in publick. I shall only recommend to their serious Consideration two passages, both which are quoted by Mr. *Boyle*. One is that of *Austin*, *Quare Legitur, si Silebitur, aut quare auditur, si non Exponitur*: Why do we publickly read the Scripture, if we must be silent and not Expound it. The other is that of *Bernard*, *Non tradit Mater parvulo nucem integram, sed frangit eam et nucleum porrigit*: Opening the Scripture is like taking the Kernel out of the Nut.

## QUESTION. VII.

*IS Baptism to be Administred to all Children whom any professed Christian shall ingage to see Educated in the Christian Religion?*

*Ans<sup>r</sup>*. If the Question were only whether all Children Adopted by Believing Parents might not be Baptized, we should not oppose. For this is granted not only by the

(†) *Contra Celsum*. L. 3. p. 142.



generality of Protestant Divines, but Eminent Writers of the Congregational Perswasion, particularly Dr. Ames, and Mr. Cotton, are for the Affirmative. But as the Question is worded, we defend the Negative. And say, that all such persons as are Comprehended in the Question, have not a right to Baptism, consequently it would be a Profanation of the Holy Institution of Christ to Administer Baptism to them. For,

1. *Papists, Socinians* and other Hereticks are *Professed Christians*. But their Children ought not to be baptised. For that is to declare their Religion to be the true Religion. When the Children of Israel were Baptised unto Moses in the Cloud, it was thereby signified that the Religion taught by Moses, was the true Religion. 1 Cor. 10. 2. But *Papists* have corrupted the very Essentials of the true Christian Religion, not by one but by many Heresies by them maintained, besides their Idolatry. Nor does it follow, that if the Children of *Papists* had no right to Baptism, that then their Baptism was a Nullity and must be Iterated. For they baptise in the same Name, and use the same outward Element (though with Superstitious Additions of their own) which is of Divine Institution; in which respects although *Fieri non debuit, factum valet*. Now if the Children of *Papists* notwithstanding their being *Professed Christians*, have no right to Baptism, if any such should engage to see a Child Educated in the Christian Religion, that could not Entitle him to this Sacred Ordinance. Who can believe that if a *Papist* will undertake to be the God-Father of the Spurious Children of *Negroes* or *Indians*, then those Children ought to be Baptised? But they ought to be so, if this be a true Position, That Baptism ought to be Administred to all Children whom any *Professed Christian* shall engage to see Educated in the Christian Religion. Our first Reformers were large enough in their Principles and Practice as to the Subject of Baptism. Nevertheless, they taught, that the Children of *Papists* had no right to Baptism: So (a) *Calvin, Farel, Beza*. Yea, the (b) *Reformed Churches in France* will not admit the Children of *Papists* to Baptism, although Protestant God-fa-

(a) *V. Calvini. Epist.*

(b) *See their discipline & La. Roque. p. 201.*

thers would engage for their Education in the true Religion! Our famous Mr. *Cartwright* has (e) proved, that such Children have no right to Baptism because they are cut off from the Covenant, and do not belong to the Visible Church. We must of necessity own the Church of *Rome* to be a true Church, if we own the Members of it to have right to Baptism. But the contrary has been evinced by Dr. *Whitaker*, *Alting*, *Turretin*, and many others who have made it appear, that Papists only retain the words of that which is called the *Apostles Creed*, but not the true sence of it.

2. There are many professors of the Protestant which is the true *Christian Religion*, whose Children have not by the appointment of Christ any right to Baptism. For we may not Baptise the Children of profane Parents. A national Synod in *Holland*, Anno 1619. Permits none to be *Susceptors* in Baptism, but such as are Orthodox in Religion, and of a blameless Life. The Ecclesiastical Discipline of the Reformed Churches in *France*, permits not them who are suspended from the Lords Supper, to present their Children to Baptism as long as their Suspension shall endure. Every body knows that *nil dit quod non habet*. No man that has not a right to Baptism himself, can convey a right to his Children. The Primitive right must be as good as the Derivative. But a Known wicked Man has no right to the Seals of Gods Covenant. *Psal.* 50. 16, 17. It is a dishonour to the Name of Christ that such should be owned as his Servants, or wear the Livery that belongs to such, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. When the Church is made an Inn to receive all Comers by a Promiscuous Baptism, the Name of the Lord is prophaned, as sayeth our great (g) *Cartwright* but now mentioned. The Ancient Doctors, particularly (h) *Tertullian* (i) *Chrysostom*, and Especially *Austin*, (k) (who has largely disputed against the Baptising of Ungodly Men though Professed Christians) are wont to alledge that Scripture. *Matth.* 7. 6. Give ye not

(e) In 1 Reply p. 172, 173. & 2d. part of 2 Reply p. 142.

(f) *V. Voet. pol. Eccles. part. 1. L. 2. p. 661.*

(g) *Defence of Admonition. p. 137.*

(h) *De Baptismo. c. 18.*

(i) *De Compunction Cordis. L. 1.*

(k) *De Fide & operibus.*

that which is Holy to Dogs, against the Baptising of such persons: which words notwithstanding they have another sense are fitly applied here. For *Baptism* is an *Holy thing*. And the Scripture Compares wicked Men (though Professors of the true Religion) unto Dogs. *Psal. 22. 20. 2 Pet. 2. 22.* No Man thinks that Infidels ought to be Baptised. But *Practical Infidels* are many times worse then *Professed ones*. *1 Tim. 5. 8.* If any Man provide not for his own House, he has denied the Faith, and is worse then an Infidel. Many *Professed Christians* do practically deny the Faith; by their Vicious Lives they Nullify their Christianity, and are worse than Infidels. To Baptise them would be to profane the Sacred and Glorious Name of Christ. Shall Swearers, Drunkards, Fornicators, and such like, who live in the Visible breach of the *Everlasting Covenant* every Day, have that Covenant Sealed unto them by *Baptism*, when it is manifest that they have no Interest in the thing Signified and Sealed by that Ordinance? Have Excommunicates or their Children a right to Baptism? The Jews (as *Buxtorf* (l) observes) looked upon Infant Children as Excommunicate with the Parents. And therefore (as another Learned Author informs us) such Children were not Circumcised. A national Synod in Scotland, Anno 1560, has declared, that the Children of Excommunicate Parents ought not (until the Parents Manifest Repentance) to be admitted unto Baptism. *Beza* allows of it in case the Children of the Excommunicate be by the Parents committed to the Tuition and Education of a faithful Member of the Church, (m) as we see in his Letter to the Ministers of *Newenburg* in *Switzerland*, but not without that Caution. When in *Geneva* a Protestant Member of a Church there had Apostatized to the Popish Religion, the Grandmother remaining still a Member of the true Church, desired Baptism for her Grand-child; but considering that the next Parents were both of them Idolaters, and the Child remaining under their Education, the Renowned *Farel* (n) refused to Baptize it, though his Colleague would do it, which occasioned an unhappy Schism in that

(l) *Buxtorf. in Lexic. Thalmudic. pag. 1101. Godwin Moses & Aaron. B. 5. Ch. 2.* (m) *Beza Epist. 10.*

(n) *V. Calvin Epist. 147.*

Church. But then shall persons who are *ipso Jure* (i.e. *Visolus Legis sine sententia judicis*) Excommunicate (which is to be affirmed of many *Professed Christians*) by Baptism be declared to have a regular standing in the Visible Church? It is by some pretended, that *Presbyterians* are for Baptizing all *Professed Christians*. They that say so are injurious to those our worthy Brethren. The Great *John Calvin* has been Esteemed the Father of *Presbyterians*. He was not for Baptizing all that pretended to Christianity, as his (a) Epistles show. In the year 1550. Our English *Josiah*, King *Edward the Sixth* granted to the *Dutch Protestants*, and other Strangers in *London*, a Charter of Incorporation to become a Church, and to have a Meeting House for them, and for their Successors, which he Ordained to be called by the name of the Church of the Lord *Jesus*, (p) Enjoyning all his Subjects to permit them quietly to use and exercise their own proper Rites and peculiar Discipline, notwithstanding they agreed not with the Rites and Ceremonies used in the Church of *England*. These Protestants dissenting from the Church of *England*, have been called *Presbyterians*. Their first and noble Pastor, *John*, who was a free Baron of *Lasco* in *Poland*, has Published an account of their Discipline, wherein he declares, That Baptism is Administred in the Publick Assembly of the Church after the Publick Sermon; for seeing Baptism does so belong to the whole Church, that none ought to be driven back that is a Member of the Church, nor to be Administred to any who is not a Member of it: it is meet that it should be performed Publickly in the face of the whole Church. ---We do Baptize their Infants alone who have joyned themselves to our Church by Publick Confession of their faith and Observation of the Ecclesiastical Discipline. ---We suffer no Stranger to offer his Infant to Baptism in our Church, who has not made a Publick Profession of his Faith, and willingly submitted himself to the Discipline of our Church. Thus writes *John a Lasco*, a noble *Polander*, who is Succeeded by the *Dutch Ministers*, and Church now in *London*. To proceed. The *Leyden Divines*, *Polyander*, *Rivet*, *Walew*, *Thysius*, were

(a) *V. Epist.* 136.

(p) *Fullers Church History*, B. 7. p. 407.

accounted *Presbyterians*. But they were not for Baptizing *professed Christians* whose Lives were profane. They (q) say expressly, *Si quis vero Licit fidem Professus impius vivat Baptismo injiciendus non est*, for which they give this Reason, That Baptism is a Sacrament not only of Faith, but of Repentance; For which cause they that persist Impenitently in any Scandalous Practises, are not subjects meet for that Sacrament. The Learned *Spanheimius* is called a *Presbyterian*. But he has by weighty Reasons proved, that Profane Men though Professed Christians, ought not to be Baptized. Mr. *Baxter* goes for a *Presbyterian*. (r) He has by irrefragable Arguments evinced, that the Children of notoriously Ungodly Men ought not to be Baptised. Mr. *George Gilasp*y was a Presbyterian of the Church in Scotland. Now his words are these. (s) I believe (saith he) no Conscientious Minister would adventure to Baptise one who has manifest and Infallible Signs of Irregeneration. Surely we cannot be answerable to God if we should Administer Baptism to a Man whose works and words do manifestly declare him to be an Unregenerate Unconverted person. By the Testimonies which have been cited, it is clear that the denial of Baptism to some, who are professed Christians, is not the Principle of Independents only.

3. Such Laxness in the Administration of Baptism as is Expressed in the Question before us, is Popish and Antichristian. It was not so in the Primitive Ages of Christianity. That Error of the necessity of Baptism (not only *necessitate precepti sed medii*) in order to Salvation. Likewise that Error of Baptismal Regeneration, that Baptism does Regenerate Men *Ex opere operato*, as Popish Authors teach, brought in this Error also of *Bellarmino* and others of that Religion affirm, that Baptism does Sanctify the Unclean, and that therefore it is not profaned when Administred to persons known to be wicked. In pursuance of this principle, a Popish Priest Baptised no less than three hundred thousand Americans. (u) And another Seven hundred thousand (as their own Historians informs us) amongst all which there was not one good

(q) *Synods. pur. Relig. disp. 44. Thef. 46.*

(r) In his *disputations of Right to Sacraments.*

(t) In *Arons rod. p. 516.*

(u) *V. Purchase pilgr. concerning America. p. 115.*

Christian. Most certainly, the Apostles did not Baptise after that Lax manner. And John Baptist required *Fruits meet for Repentance* of the Adult persons whom he admitted to this Sacred Ordinance; and when a *Generation of Vipers* came to him for Baptism, he rejected them because of their Impenitency. *Matth. 3. 8. with Luk. 7. 36.*

### QUESTION VIII.

**IS Baptism in a private House where there is no Church Assembly allowable?**

*Ans.* Papists, Episcopal Protestants, and some Lutherans plead for it. But the (a) Doctrine of the old *Waldenses* was, that Baptism ought to be Administred in a full Congregation, to the end that he that is received into the Church, should be reputed and held of all for a Christian Brother, and that all the Congregation might pray for him, that he may be a Christian in Heart, as he is outwardly esteemed a Christian. Most of our Writers (especially Presbyterians) disapprove of Private Baptism. The Reformed in France, (b) and the Churches in (c) Holland also required Baptism to be publickly administred. Our English Presbyterians in the Directory says, that Baptism is not to be Administred in private places, or privately but in the place of publick Worship, and in the face of the Congregation. The Geneva Divines (as is to be seen in Zanchys Epistles) when this case was proposed to them, Whether Baptism might not be administred in private, Advised those that sent to them, not to Baptise any but where there was a Publick Assembly, for which they gave several Reasons. Calvin, although he does not judge private Baptism to be a meer nullity, nevertheless in his (d) Institutions, he disallows of it. And in his Epistles, he reasoneth after this manner, (e) Baptism Seals our Introduction and Initiation into the Visible Church and Body of Christ.

(a) See Perin of the *Waldenses Doctrine*. p. 43.

(b) See their discipline. ch. 11. s. 6.

(c) *V. Voet. de pol. Eccles. part 1. L. 2. p. 726.*

(d) *L. 4. c. 15. s. 16.*

(e) *Epist. 185.*



and our Adoption to the Heavenly Inheritance, therefore (says Calvin) *Fas non est administrare Baptismum nisi in Casu Publico*, It is not lawful to Administer Baptism except in a publick Congregation. The Judicious and Learned Professors (f) of *Leyden*, condemn private Baptisms: So does (g) *Maresius*, and so does (h) *Alting*. In *Scotland*, (i) *Mr. Calderwood*, (k) *Mr. Gelaspy*, (l) *Mr. Rutherford*, have all of them witnessed against it. It is evident that in the early Ages of Christianity, *Private Baptisms* were not used, but there was an Error on the other hand, for they used not to Baptise except at *Easter* and *Pentecost*, when were the greatest Assemblies. In the very beginnings of the Reformation in *England*, private Baptism was not allowed of except in case of necessity. *King Edward 6.* his *Common Prayer Book*, requires that the people should be admonished to bring their Children to Baptism only on the Lords days, and on Holy days, that so all the Congregation might be witnesses of their being received into the number of the Faithful, and that they might all be put in mind of what they had promised in Baptism. And although private Baptisms are ordinarily practised by the Ministers of the Church of *England*, when no necessity compels them, the *Liturgy* allows not of it. The Arguments which our Divines produce against private Baptism are such as these.

1. *John Baptist* did not Baptise in private; but where there was an open publick meeting. It has been objected that *Paul* Baptised the *Jaylor* in a private House where there was no Church Assembly: To which is Answered, that *Paul* was an extraordinary Officer: And that it was impossible in that Place at that Time to call a Congregation of Christians to be witnesses of the Administration, when as yet there were no Christians in that City

2. Baptism is a part of publick Ministry: It ought to be as publick as Preaching. Nor may it be administered except

(f) *Synops. disp. 44. Thes. 53.*

(g) *In Epist. Theol.*

(h) *Problem. Theol. part 2. p. 162.*

(i) *Altar. damasc.*

(k) *English Popish Ceremonies. p. 112.*

(l) *Plea for Presbytery. p. 315.*

by one who is called to the Publick Ministry.

3. No person may be cast out of the Church privately, but the proceedings therein ought to be publick with the consent and presence of the whole Church. Therefore the Seal of Admission into the Church by Baptism ought to be publick also. There is a Parity of reason therein.

4. Our profession of the Name of God and of Christ, ought to be in the most publick way and manner that possibly can be, *Matth. 10. 32. Rev. 14. 1.* But in Baptism we do in a singular manner make a profession of the Name of the true God and of Jesus Christ. *Matth. 28. 20. Act. 19. 5. Gal. 3. 27.*

5. *Didoclavius* (1) argues more like a Congregational Man than like a Presbyterian. For thus he reasons. The power of Administring Sacraments is as *Crysestom* speaks, *Delivered to the Church*, although the Dispensation or Administration thereof belongs to the Pastors. Now the Minister alone (says he) has not all the power, so as that he may separately Administer the Sacrament to whom he pleaseth, but there ought to be the approbation, consent, and presence of the Church.

6. This Practice of private Baptism was grounded on an Error; namely on a persuasion of the absolute necessity of Baptism to Salvation. *Austin* was not without that Error. He thought that Infants who dyed Unbaptised could not go to Heaven, for which reason he has been called, *Durus Pater Infantum*. There was about the same time another Error worse than this crept into many Churches; viz. That none could be saved that did not partake of the Lords Supper. So did they misunderstand that Scripture, *Joh. 6. 53.* As if Sacramental Eating were there intended; whereas those words are spoken by our Saviour before the Lords Supper was instituted, and are meant of the Souls Eating and Drinking by Faith. But from this Error it was that Children were made to Eat and Drink of the Consecrated Bread and Wine. So lest they should miss of Salvation, they would Baptise them in private when it could not be done in publick. But we know that it is the Contempt, and not the meer Pri-

IN NEW ENGLAND ESTABLISHED. 35  
vation of Sacraments that is damning. The *Helvetican* Churches do in no case allow of Baptism in any private House. See the *Liturgy* of the Churches in *Switzerland*, p. 90.

## QUESTION. IX.

**O**ught all that Contribute towards the Maintainance, to have the Priviledge of Voting in the Election of a Pastor?

*Ans.* It would be *Simoniacal* to Affirm that this Sacred Priviledge may be Purchased with Money, or, that Contribution can Entitle to it. For,

1. This is against the Scripture, and that in more respects than one.

1. The Scripture requires all that are taught to Contribute to him that is their Teacher, *Gal.* 6. 6. But it does not say that all who are taught shall have power to chuse a Pastor for that Church where they are taught. In the Primitive Times, the *Catechumens* did many of them Contribute to him that was their Instructor, but not one of them all had the priviledge of Voting in the Election of the Churches Pastor.

2. The word of God has given power to the Brethren in particular Churches to chuse their own Officers, *Act.* 1. 16. & 2, 3, 5. & 14. 23. Wherefore to give it to others besides them is not according to the word of Christ.

3. If all that Contribute have power to Vote in the Election of a Pastor, then many women must have that Priviledge, for they may Contribute to the Maintainance. But this the Apostle allows not of, *1 Cor.* 14. 34, 35. So that this Affirmation is Contrary to the Scripture in more respects than one.

2. It is against Reason. For them who have no right to the Lords Supper themselves, to appoint who shall be the dispenser of that Ordinance to others, is highly irrational.

3. This will deprive particular Churches of that Power which does belong to them, and which Christ has purchased for them with the price of his own Blood. To have power to chuse their own Pastors, is an invaluable Priviledge. For them to give, or rather to sell that Priviledge away to all that will Contribute, must needs be displeasing to the Lord

Lord who has bought it for them at so dear a rate. It may be the Contributors will be more than twice so many as the Brethren of the Church. So it may easily come to pass, that a Pastor shall be Chosen and not so much as one in the Church that did, or could in Conscience Vote for him. So then this Principle is of Dangerous Consequence. It may soon prove fatal and destructive to the Churches, and to the Interest of Christ amongst them.

4. It is contrary to the principles and practices of Christians in the primitive Times. Eusebius says, that after the Death of James, the Church chose Simeon the Son of Cleophas to be his Successor. Nothing is more Evident then that in the first ages of the Church, Pastors were Chosen by all and only their Flocks; in chusing a Minister they did *Klerogoin*, that is, chuse him by Lot; from whence it was that Ministers had the Name of the Clergy given to them. Ignatius writing to the Church in Philadelphia, tells them, that it belonged to them to Chuse their Pastor. The Nicene Council in a Synodal Letter to the Churches in Africa, advise them to Chuse Orthodox Pastors instead of Arians. Cyprian tells us, (w) that Cornelius was made Bishop *Suffragio Plebis*, by the Suffrages of the people. Yea, he says Lib. 1. Epist. 41. that *Plebs maxime potestatem habet, vel sacerdotes dignos eligendi, vel indignos recusandi*. And there are many passages in him and other Fathers, (as they are called) which shew that the power of Chusing Pastors was in the Church. Nay, Antichrist had got a considerable footing in the World before ever this priviledge of Chusing their own Pastors was wrested out of the hands of Particular Churches. It was about the Year 1219. that Pope Innocent III. forbid the Laity to meddle in the Election of any Church Guide. M. La Roque (x) supposeth, that Canon was made in opposition to the *Albigenses* who retained the Ancient practice of the Churches in Chusing their own Officers. The Emperor Constantine writing to Nicomedia, says, that it was in their Power to make a Choice of what Pastor they pleased. The Council of Calcedon confirms the Church-

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(w) In Epist. 52.

(x) of the Eccles. discipline p. 20.

es power of Elections. There are many Instances to this purpose in the (y) writers of *Ecclesiastical History*.

5. All our Great reformers and Eminent Modern Divines, ( Prelatical ones excepted ) have asserted the power of Electing Ministers to be in the Church. The depriving the Church of this privilege is by *Calvin*, called *Impia Ecclesie Spoliato*. A Spoil impiously committed upon the Church of God. I could easily produce Testimonies for this, out of *Luther*, *Bullinger*, *Musculus*, *Ursin*, *Junius*, (z) and many others, but it is needless. Some Learned writers of the Presbyterian Judgment, in their arguings against *Jus Patronatus*, or the power of *Patrons* to impose Ministers on the people, and in their disputations against *Episcopal Institution and Induction*, have strenuously asserted and proved, that particular Churches have power to Chuse their own Pastors. One of the Articles agreed unto by the *United Brethren* in London is, That each particular Church has right to Chuse their own Officers. That this was the Judgment of the Old Puritan Nonconformists is asserted in that Book which bears the Title of *Puritanismus Anglicanus*, which goeth under the name of *Dr. Ames*, because of his preface to it, but *Mr. Bradshaw* and not *Ames* was the Author, as a Learned professor (†) in the University of *Leyden* has informed us.

6. One of our Synods in *New-England*, viz. that which met at *Boston* in the Year 1662. does Expressly declare, That the power of Voting in the Church, belongs to the Males in full Communion, and that others are to be debarred from that Power. Prop. 4, p. 18. In other Places of the world, although a Modest dissenting is not an offence, yet it is not allowed in Terms to Contradict, what has been by Synods Established.

7. To give the Power of Electing Ministers to any besides the particular Churches over which they are set, is Contrary to the good Laws of this Province, which Confirm unto the Several Churches therein, all their former Privileges respecting Divine Worship, and Church Order, and particularly their Power of Chusing their Ministers, which Laws have ( through the Favour of our Lord Jesus Christ to

(y) *V. Theod.* l. 4. c. 20. *Socrat.* l. 5. c. 15. *Zozom.* l. 8. c. 19.

(z) See *Mr. Jacob* of Church Government, with the peoples consent. Chapt. 3. (†) *Hornbeck* Epist. ad Durem. p. 27.

his Churches in New-England) obtained the Royal Approbation.

## QUESTION X.

**I**S it Expedient that Churches should enter into a Consociation, or Agreement, that matters of more than ordinary Importance, such as the Gathering of a New Church, the Ordination, Deposition, or Translation of a Pastor be done with Common Consent?

*Ans.* This is both Expedient and Necessary. The Synod which Convened at Boston, Anno 1662. has sufficiently cleared this point. And although there was in that Synod some difference as to the Question about the Subject of Baptism then discussed; in the Answer to the other Question relating to Consociation of Churches, there was an Unanimous Concurrence. The design of which is not (as has been well observed by Dr. (a) Ames and Mr. (b) Parker) to infringe the Liberty of particular Churches, but from the word of God to direct and strengthen them in the Regular Exercise thereof. Reasons for it are such as these.

1. The Churches of Christ stand in a Sisterly relation each to other under Christ their head, having the same Faith, and ought to have the same Order. Eph. 4. 5. Col. 2. 5. Phil. 3. 16. This Union implies a suitable Communion, and that they ought to have a Mutual care of each other. Cant. 8. 8.

2. The Scripture teacheth, that in weighty Cases we should ask Counsel. 2 Sam. 20. 18. Prov. 3. 5. and 15. 22. and 24. 6. Which General Rules concern Politics as well as particular Persons, and Churches as well as civil Societies.

3. There are Scripture Examples to instruct us in our Duty herein. We find, that when the Churches in Antioch had a weighty Case before them, they sent to another Church for Counsel, Act. 15. 2. The Apostle Paul sought for the Concurrence, and Right hand of fellowship of other Apostles

(a) Medul. Theol. L. 1. c. 39. Thes. 27.

(b) De pol. Eccles. rules. L. 3. c. 22.



Gala. 2. 9. Ordinary Elders and Churches, have no less need of each other to prevent their *running in vain*, Gal. 2. 2.

4. Such a Communion of Churches as that which we plead for, is no *Innovation*; but that which has ever been the Profession and practice of those that have been called *Congregational*. There is a Book which bears the Title of, *An Answer of the Elders of the several Churches in New England to Thirty two Questions*, Printed in the year 1643. Of which Book my Father Mather was the Sole Author. And he wrote it in the Primitive Times of these Churches, (*viz.* in the year 1639) as himself assured me. What he wrote was approved of by other Elders, especially by Mr. Cotton, unto whom he Communicated it. Now in Answer to Q. 10. are these words, *The Consociation of Churches into Classes and Synods, we hold to be Lawful, and in some Cases Necessary: as namely, in things that are not Peculiar to one Church, but common to them all. And likewise, when a Church is not able to End any matter which concerns only themselves, then they are to seek for Council and Advice from Neighbour Churches, as the Church at Antioch did send unto the Church at Jerusalem, Act. 15. 2. The ground and use of Classes and Synods with the Limitations therein to be Observed, is Summarily laid down by Dr. Ames, unto whom we do wholly Consent in this matter.* This was, and is the Judgment of all that adhere to the Order of the Gospel Professed in the Churches of New-England. The world is much mistaken in thinking that Congregational Churches are Independent. That Name has indeed been fastned upon them by their Adversaries; but our Platform of Discipline Chap. 2. Sect. 3. disclaims the name. And so does our Renowned Hooker (c) in his Survey of Church Discipline. Likewise those famous Apologists in the Assembly at Westminster, *viz.* Dr. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Burrough's, and Mr. Bridge, say, that *It is a Maxim to be abhorred, that a single and particular Society of Men professing the name of Christ, should Arrogate to themselves an Exemption from giving an account to, or being censurable by Neighbour Churches about them.* That Apostle of this Age, (as Dr. Goodwin calls him) Mr. Cotton,

the first and for ever famous Teacher in this *Boston*, when he in the Name of the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, gave to Mr. *Mitchel* the right hand of fellowship, at his Ordination to the Pastoral Office in the Church of *Cambridge*, he did in a singular manner recommend to him (and that Excellent Man was to his dying day mindful of Mr. *Cottons* Advice) endeavours for the establishment of a *Consociation* amongst the Churches of Christ throughout this *Colony*, that wise Man foreseeing that without this, disorder and confusion would in Process of time inevitably happen; as I have more largely declared in (d) another Discourse in which Mr. *Cottons* proposals respecting the *Consociation* mentioned, are Published to the world. Moreover, that the Concurring Judgment of those who are *Congregational* is according hereunto, is Evident from the *Declaration of Faith or Order* which was agreed unto by the Messengers of One hundred and Twenty *Congregational Churches* in *England*, who met at the *Savoy* in *London*, Anno 1658. They thus declare, (e) *In case of difficulties and differences in point of Doctrine, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned in their peace, union, and edification, or any Member or Members of any Church are injured in, or by any proceeding in Censures not agreeable to Truth and Order: It is according to the mind of Christ, that many Churches holding Communion together, do by their Messengers meet in a Synod or Council, to Consider and give their Advice in, or about the matter in difference.* But the Testimony of that Blessed *Jeremiah Burroughs* puts the thing beyond all dispute. For his words are these (f) *Those in the Congregational way acknowledge,*

1. *That they are bound in Conscience to give account of their ways to Churches about them, or to any other who shall require it. This not in an Arbitrary way, but as a duty which they owe to God and Man.*

2. *They acknowledge that Synods of other Ministers and Elders about them are an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, for the helping the Church against Errors, Schisms and Scandals.*

3. *That these Synods may from the power they have from*

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(f) In my first Principles of N. E. p. 28, &c.

(d) In his *Irenicum*, p. 43, 44, 47.

*Christ, admonish Men and Churches in his Name, when they see evils continuing in, or growing upon the Church, and their admonitions carry with them the Authority of Jesus Christ.*

4. *As there shall be cause, they may declare Men or Churches to be subverters of the Faith, or otherwise according to the nature of their offence, to shame them before all the Churches about them.*

5. *They may by a solemn act in the Name of Jesus Christ, refuse any further Communion with them till they repent.*

6. *They may declare also in the Name of Christ, that those erring People or Churches are not to be received into fellowship with any of the Churches of Christ, nor to have Communion with any other in the Ordinances of Christ.*

*If it shall be said, surely they do not come up to these six things mentioned. To that I Answer, (says Mr. Burroughs) I do not in these deliver only my own Judgment, but by what I know of the Judgment of all those Brethren with whom I have occasion to converse by conference both before and since, I stand charged to make it good to be their Judgment also; yea, it has been theirs and mine for divers years, even then when we never thought to have enjoyed our own Land again. We see by these Testimonies, that Congregational men in general, as well as the Churches of New-England in special, are no such Independents, no such Brownists, no such Morellians, as some have represented them to be.*

5. *If we admit not a Consociation of Churches, there will be no Remedy against the Male Administrations of particular Churches; nor any cure of Schisms, or Errors that may happen in our Churches. This has been objected (but injuriously) as a scandal attending the Congregational Church Discipline, and that therefore it is a way not practicable. Indeed, if we refuse this part of Church Communion, the objection would be unanswerable. And who would be willing to be a Member of that Church, in which although he should be never so much wronged, there will be no relief for him upon Earth? There was once a Church in New-England, which having censured one of their Members, he complained of the supposed wrong done him, to Neighbour Elders, who thought he had received hard measure. The Pastor, and major part of the Church, were*

the first and for ever famous Teacher in this *Boston*, when he in the Name of the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, gave to Mr. *Mitchel* the right hand of fellowship, at his Ordination to the Pastoral Office in the Church of *Cambridge*, he did in a singular manner recommend to him (and that Excellent Man was to his dying day mindful of Mr. *Cottons* Advice) endeavours for the establishment of a *Consociation* amongst the Churches of Christ throughout this Colony, that wise Man foreseeing that without this, disorder and confusion would in Process of time inevitably happen; as I have more largely declared in (d) another Discourse in which Mr. *Cottons* proposals respecting the *Consociation* mentioned, are Published to the world. Moreover, that the Concurring Judgment of those who are Congregational is according hereunto, is Evident from the Declaration of Faith or Order which was agreed unto by the Messengers of One hundred and Twenty Congregational Churches in *England*, who met at the *Savoy* in *London*, Anno 1658. They thus declare, (e) *In case of difficulties and differences in point of Doctrine, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned in their peace, union, and edification, or any Member or Members of any Church are injured in, or by any proceeding in Censures not agreeable to Truth and Order: It is according to the mind of Christ, that many Churches holding Communion together, do by their Messengers meet in a Synod or Council, to Consider and give their Advice in, or about the matter in difference.* But the Testimony of that Blessed *Jeremiah Burroughs* puts the thing beyond all dispute. For his words are these (f) *Those in the Congregational way acknowledge,*

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not willing the case should have a re-bearing before the Elders and Messengers of other Churches. Upon this, great clamours were raised, and prejudices taken up against the Congregational Discipline. Mr. *Cawdrey* got this story by the end, and in his *Epistle to the Dissenting Brethren* p. 10. He says that a Minister in N. E. writes over to England, that this injured person would have no remedy until the Churches in New-England were become Presbyterians and that if Independency does not break all the Churches in New-England excepting a few semi-Presbyterians, some are deceived. Who the Minister was that wrote thus to England, Mr. *Cawdrey* tells us not. But it is a great wrong to the Churches of New-England, and to the way Congregational, to Represent them, and all that are of that way, as being of such Independent and Unaccountable Principles, which they utterly disclaim. Dr. *Owen* in his *Disciplinary Catechism*, and especially in the *Additament thereunto*, (which was written on occasion of an harsh and rash censure in the Independent Church in Cambridge in England) has with great evidence of reason, refuted the maintainers of such an Independency.

6. The order asserted is (as has been truly observed by the Learned Doctor last mentioned) confirmed by the practice of the first Churches after the Apostles: for when the Church in *Corinth* had by an undue Exercise of Discipline deposed some of their Elders, the Church of *Rome* taking Cognizance of it, wrote to them, reproving their rashness, and advise their restoration, as is to be seen in the Epistle of *Clement* than Pastor of the Church in *Rome*, which *Clement* is thought to be the same whom *Paul* speaks of, *Phil.* 4. 3. And when the Church of *Antioch* was afterwards troubled with the Heresies of the Pastor *Samosetanus*, the Neighbouring Pastors came unto the Church, and joyned their concurrence in his deposition. It is certain that in the next Ages to the Apostles, a Pastor was not settled in any Church without the concurrence of others. When the Church had Elected a Pastor, they presented him to the Neighbour Pastors for their Approbation, nor could he be legally confirmed without it. (g) *Eusebius* tells us that

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(g) *Lib.* 5. c. 11.



when *Alexander* was chosen Pastor of the Church in *Jerusalem* by the Brethren of that place, he had the common consent of the circumjacent Pastors. And thus (as *Cyprian* informs us) it was practised in all the Churches throughout *Africa*. He speaks particularly concerning *Sabinus*, who was Elected a Pastor of *Eremita* in *Spain*, that Neighbour Ministers concurred in his Ordination, after the Fraternity had Elected him. His words are (h) *Quod factum videmus in sabini Ordinatione ut de universæ fraternitatis suffragio, & de Episcoporum judicio, Episcopatus, ei deferetur.* We find in Ecclesiastical story, that in the primitive Times the Names of Persons to be Ordained were Published abroad, that so if any one had ought to object they might produce it. Which custom of the Christians in the Election of their Pastors was so highly approved of by the Emperor *Severus*, as that he would have it put in practice in Establishing Governours of Provinces throughout the Empire.

7. Neither do the Reformed Churches Ordain a Minister without the concurrence and approbation of Neighbour Ministers. To give the Right hand of Fellowship to a new Ordained Minister, was a usual custom amongst the Churches in *Bohemia*, for which they alledged that Scripture, *Gal. 2. 6.* as is Testified by (i) *Commenius*. In the beginning of the Reformation in the Church of *Scotland*, one Article of their discipline, is, That when a Minister is Ordained, the rest of the Ministers shall take the Elected by the hand in sign of their consent: as is related in the History of the Reformation (k) which goeth under the Name of Mr. *Knox*. I find also, that there is the like practice in the Protestant French Churches. When a Minister is Ordained, two Deputies of the Synod or Colloque are appointed in the presence of the people, to give him the Right Hand of Fellowship. These things I have the rather mentioned for the Information of our young Divines, who being Unstudied in the Controversies of Church discipline, are apt to think that the Custom of giving the Right hand of Fellowship at Ordinations, is a Novelty and Singularity practised no where but in New-Eng,

(h) *Cyprian* Epist. 68.

(i) *Rat. ordin. discip.* p. 33.

(k) Page 288.

land whenas it was used in other Churches long before there was a New-England in the world. But (not to divert) the French Protestant Discipline will by no means allow that a Minister should intrude himself into any Church, without the approbation of Neighbour Pastors. One of the Articles of their Discipline is in these words, *The Minister that shall intrude himself altho' he were approved by the People, is not to be approved by Neighbour Ministers or others.* A late (1) Author that comments on this Article of the French Discipline, observes that it holds a conformity with the practice of the Churches in the primitive Times. For the council of Antioch has this Canon, *If a Bishop out of Employment intrude himself into a Vacant Church and usurp the place without the Authority of a Synod, Let him be turned out although he may be approved by all the People, which he shall have gained to him.* Thus careful have Churches been, both in former and in later ages, that in the establishment of a Minister, the concurrence of Neighbour Elders should be endeavoured. And this which has been said is consonant to the Articles agreed unto by the United Brethren at London. They declare, *That in so weighty a matter as calling and choosing a Pastor, we Judge ordinarily requisite, that every such Church consult and advise with the Pastors of Neighbouring Congregations. And that, It is Ordinarily requisite that the Pastors of Neighbouring Congregations concur in the Ordination of the Person chosen by the Brother-hood of that Particular Church.* That word Ordinarily is well put in, because in a Time of Persecution that cannot be done, which in a Time of Liberty may, and ought to be attended. The Presbyterian Discipline of France, requires that a Minister shall not be admitted to his Office, but by the Provinical Synod; except (say they) *it be in troublesome Times,* and then he may be ordained with the Approbation of only three Ministers. The like to which was decreed in the Synod of Nice, that ordinarily all the Pastors of a Province should concur in the Ordination of a Pastor, but in case of an urgent necessity so requiring, it might be done with the concurrence of three Pastors. And these things may serve to justify a former Law made by the

(1) La. Roque p. 23.

civil Government in this Colony, That no person should be Ordained a Minister in any Church, but with the Approbation of the Elders and Messengers of four Neighbouring Churches. This practice although it has not at present the Authority of the civil Law to confirm it, nevertheless being grounded upon Scripture and right reason it ought to be Sacred unto us.

## QUESTION. XI.

*MAY the Brethren in Churches and not the Pastor only be sent unto, and have their Voice in Ecclesiastical Councils?*

*Ans.* We maintain the Affirmative in this Question. In the last General Synod which was in New-England, viz. That which met at Boston in the year 1679. Some Churches sent only their Elders without any Brethren: which the Synod was so far unsatisfied with, as that they would not allow those Pastors to sit with them, until they had prevailed with their Churches to send Brethren also, being very tender of admitting any thing that should look like an infringement of that Liberty and privilege which does by the Institution of Christ belong to the Brother-hood in particular Churches. The reasons of our Judgment are such as these.

1. The first Synod that ever was in which a Copy and Sampler is left to all succeeding Generations, did consist not only of Elders but of Brethren, who had their voice therein, namely the Synod at Jerusalem, of which *Act. 15.* giveth us the account. The 4th. verse speaketh of the Church as well as of the Apostles and Elders. Now he that was in his Time the Oracle of the University of Cambridge argueth thus, (m) why was the cause brought to the People and not to the Elders only, if they had not power to judge in the case? And he therefore concludes against Bellarmine, that every Laick in that Synod had a definitive suffrage as much as

Peter himself. And whereas Bellarmine, objects, that the Brethren did only bear and not speak, in that Assembly. *Whitaker* argues from verse 12. That the Brethren had been (not tumultuous but in an orderly manner) declaring their apprehensions on the case under controversy; or however that the Expressions in that Verse implies, that they had a Liberty of Speech granted to them. And in verse 22. 'tis said, *It pleased the Apostles and Elders with the whole Church, &c.* In the Council of *Basil*, it was argued, that that word, *It pleased*, being spoken not of the Elders only, but of others, it does Evidently import, that those other, even the Members of the Church had also a power of Judgment and determination in the Question then under debate. From thence likewise does *Fuel* against *Harding* prove, that *Laicks* (as they call the Brethren in the Churches) have this power of right belonging to them, to Sit and Judge in Ecclesiastical Councils. And so does *Dr. Willet* (n) a Learned and worthy Conformable Divine of the Church of England) from that same Scripture conclude. Moreover, in *Verse 23*: 'tis said, that the Letters containing the Decrees of that Council were *Sept* (and consequently signed) in the Name of the Brethren as well as of the Apostles and Elders. Which shows that they had some-thing else to do in that Synod than only to keep silence, and hear what others had to say. Wherefore *Dr. Owen* might well say, (o) That in Synods, It is not necessary that Elders alone should be sent by the Churches, but they may have others joyned with them, and had so until prelati- cal usurpation over-turned their Liberty. There were many besides Paul and Barnabas sent from Antioch to Jerusalem, and the Brethren of that Church, whatever is impudent- ly pretended to the contrary, concurred in the degree and determination there made. Thus *Dr. Owen*.

2. There is weight in *Austins* Argument, viz. That the power of the Keyes belongs to the whole Church: And that therefore not the Pastors only should have their voice in Councils. Since Councils represent the Churches by whom they are Chosen, it is meet that some of each order should

(n) In Synops papism. Cont. 3. Q. 3. p. 126.

(o) Of a Gospel Church. p. 263.

be chosen. Church Members are fellow Citizens, and therefore ought not to be deprived of their power.

3. It is not their Office but the Churches *Delegation* that giveth power to be the Members in Synods. The *Specifying act* in which *Synodal power* and so the right of a *Decisive Vote* is founded, is the Churches *Delegation*. None ought to be Admitted into such Assemblies, but those whom the Churches shall send. Now as in Civil Councils, many times not only Magistrates but other Citizens duly qualified are sent to represent the City whose delegates they are; so in *Ecclesiastical Councils*, not only the Rulers of the Churches, but others may receive admission from them, and have then and there equal power with the former. True it is, that of these *Delegates* from the Churches, the *Elders* ought to be the principally concerned. They are presumed best to know the state of their Churches, and to be best able to Judge in *Ecclesiastical Affairs*. This notwithstanding, they are not to assume the sole power to themselves, nor yet a Negative Voice in such Assemblies, as they may in their own particular Churches. It must (says Dr. Owen) (p) be affirmed that no person by Vertue of any Office meerly, have right to be Members of Ecclesiastical Synods as such. Neither is there either example or reason to give colour to any such pretence. Officers of the Church, Bishops, Pastors, Elders, may be present in them, ought to be present in them, are meetest for the most part so to be, but meerly as such, it belongs not unto them. This will seem to some to be *Independent Doctrine*. But that is their mistake. Bullinger, Hyperius, Daneus, Voetius, and amongst our English writers Whitaker, Parker, and other great Divines have affirmed as much as this comes to. Yea, the generality of our Divines in their disputation against the Papists *Episcopal Monopoly of Synodal Power*, reasons as we do. And it is clear from this Argument. If it belongs to Elders as such to be Members of Synods, then all such must be there. But if so, then in case a Synod should continue sitting a year together (as it often happens) all that while the particular Churches to whom those Elders belong that are remote from the place where the Synod meets, must not

have one Elder to instruct and guide them.

4. The Questions which are handled and decided in Synods are commonly such as *Brethren* and not *Elders* only are concerned in. This Reason is urged by our *Juel* (a great light in the English Church) in his defence of the *Church of England*. Yea, some Learned *Papists* have been so ingenious as to confess there is weight in it. *That which pertains to all is not valid, if some of all sorts have not a consent in it*; which assertion (says Dr. *Fyeld* writing against the *Romanists*) has its foundation in nature and in reason.

5. In some Churches there are *Brethren* whose gifts and abilities are beyond their *Pastors*. And why should not such be Members of *Ecclesiastical Councils*, and have a suffrage therein equal with any others? In some *Monasteries* of old there were *Readers of Divinity*, whose work it was (as the incomparable (q) *Usher* has observed) to instruct *Clergy Men*. There are at this day in some *Universities*, Learned professors of *Theology* (who are not *Pastors* of any Church) perhaps more able to give light in a difficult Controversy than any *Elder* in the Synod. What reason can be given why Churches should not delegate such, or why they should not have *decisive Votes* as well as any others?

6. The most Famous Synods which have been in the world have consisted not of *Elders* only. That in the next Ages to the Apostles, others besides *Pastors* were Members of *Ecclesiastical Councils*, our *Divines* in their writings against the *Papists* have proved. In the Council of *Calcedon* there were Seven *Earls*, and Ten noble *Senators*, and not *Ecclesiasticks* only. Since the Reformation, the Churches of *Sweveland* (r) Petitioned that there might be a Council called of every degree and state consisting of the best Learned and most Godly Men whom the Province did afford. In the famous Synod of *Dort*, there were besides *Pastors*, Professors of *Divinity*, and many *Seniors* or *Ruling Elders* who were not ordained Officers. In the Assembly at *Westminster* which met July 1. 1643. There were not only *Pastors* of Church-

(q) de Success Eccles. c. 7. s. 24.

(r) See Harmon. of Confessions. p. 602.



es, but several noble Men, e. g. The Earl of *Pembroke*, the Lord *Say*, the Lord *Wharton* ( who told me eight years ago, that he was the only person of that Assembly then living ) and several others of the Nobility, and some Gentlemen of the House of Commons, Mr. *Selden*, Mr. *Rouse*, Mr. *Whitlock*, and others: Also Commissioners from *Scotland* were joyned with them, e. g. The Earl of *Lothian*, Lord *Warristone*, Lord *Lauderdale*, besides Ministers from that Kingdom. So then it is not an Independent Phansy, that Assemblies met to consult about Ecclesiastical and Religious Controversies should consist of other Persons besides Ecclesiasticks.

7. Some not sound in the Faith have thought it their interest to maintain the Negative in this Question. In an old Heretical Council (s) there was an out cry, *Synodus Episcoporum est*. Synods should consist of none but Bishops, others are Superfluous. So do the Papists Teach: They say that in the Synod, *Act. 15.* only the Apostles were Judges, and that the *Laics*, or *Brethren* there had nothing to do but to here and submit their Judgments and Consent to what the other should determine. Just after the same manner do some Prelate Protestants, particularly *Sursiff*, and *Bridges* express themselves. The Jesuit *Sanders* rails against the *Magdeburgenses* because in their Ecclesiastical History they affirm that *Laicks* were Members of Synods. None (says he) but Mad-men can believe that *Mechanicks* should sit in Council with Bishops to Judge of Ecclesiastical affairs. But as to that objection, that Illiterate persons are not fit to be in Synods there to determine Questions wherein Religion is concerned, a very Learned Dutch (t) Divine giveth a double Answer.

1. That some who are not Pastors of Churches are nevertheless Men of great Learning, as were many of the *Seniors* in the Synod of *Dort*.

2. That some who do not excel in Scholastical Learning are versed in the Holy Scriptures, and in Zeal and Piety Excel some Ministers. Many *Seniors* with us (says he

(s) *V. Willet ubi supra.* p. 127.

(t) *Voet pol. Eccles. part. 3.* p. 195.

abode by the Truth, when their Pastors did not so, in the Time when the *Arminian Remonstrants* made a disturbance in the Churches.

## QUESTION XII.

**D**O the Essence of a Minister's Call Consist in his being Ordained with the Imposition of hands by other Ministers?

*Ans.* There are who say that it does: And that the Minister imposing hands must be a Bishop, or otherwise it is no valid Ordination. Which notion makes all (or most of) the Ministers in *France, Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, Scotland, &c.* to be no true Ministers for want of *Episcopal Ordination*. We have these things to offer to the contrary.

1. The Essence of a Ministers Call consists in a mutual Election between him and his People. As in Marriage the Consent of both parties is Essentially requisite, but a publick Solemnization of the Marriage is not so. The Coronation of a King is not Essential to his Office, nor is the Solemn Inauguration of a Publick Magistrate Essential to his being a Magistrate. No more is Ordination to the being of a Minister. Learned Papists notwithstanding they are wont to place the Essence of a Ministers Call in his Ordination, says that a Cardinal has this Ecclesiastical power by virtue of his Election before his Instalment. And that a Pope when Elected has power to rule the Church before his Inthronization. The Lawyers say that *Solemnia non sunt de rei Substantia*. We cannot say that if a Man has not received Imposition of hands, that then he is no Pastor, but we may say that if he has not been Elected by some Church of Christ he is no Pastor, but his Ordination is a nullity. For which cause the Learned (u) and noble Morney approves of Chrysostom, his saying, that Election by the People is so necessary that without it there is neither Altar, nor Priesthood. And a whole Council, viz. that of Calcedon has pronounced all such Ordinations to be null, as we shall afterwards have occasion more fully to declare. Suppose a person qualified

(u) Of the Church. Cha. 11. p. 125.

with Ministerial gifts should suffer Shipwreck in a remote Island where there are none but Heathen, and should by Preaching be instrumental in the Conversion of many of 'em, might not these his Converts Elect him to be their Pastor, and might not be accepting of their Call, Administer all Ordinances to them without any Ordination by the Imposition of the hands of Ministers, where there are no Ministers? Mr. Herle a Learned Presbyterian, does not deny it. And Dr. Whitaker (w) affirms no less in saying, that if there were not a Bishop in the World the Church could Create Bishops Ecclesiastical Story informs us, That *Ædissus* and *Frumentus* being private Men by Preaching the Gospel Converted a great Nation of Indians. Might they not Administer Sacraments to these Converts being Elect'd by them to be their Pastors, without any Imposition of hands from other Pastors in a Country where none were? See Dr. Fulk on Rom. 10. 15.

2. Not only Congregational Men, but many of the Presbyterian Judgment, and others also, esteem the Imposition of Hands to be an indifferent and not a necessary thing. That which may be either done or left undone without Sin. Thus do the Presbyterians in Scotland declare. In the History of the Church of Scotland written by Mr. Calderwood, p. 26. It is asserted, that Imposition of hands they judge not necessary in the Admission of Ministers. And when in the year 1597 that Question was by the King put to the General Assembly (x) *Is he a Lawful Pastor who wants Imposition of hands?* Their Answer was in these words, *Imposition or Laying on of hands is not Essential and necessary, but Ceremonial and indifferent in the Admission of a Pastor.* This does Mr. Gillespy also maintain in his Learned Discourse against English Popish Ceremonies p. 285. The Dutch Churches esteem Imposition of hands to be *Adiaphoreus*. And therefore sometimes in the Ordination of Pastors they omit that ceremony; and they never use it in the Ordination either of Ruling Elders or of Deacons. So far as I can learn, the Churches of New-England are the only ones in the World that Ordain Ru-

(w) De pen. rif. Roman. Quest. 2. cap. 15. p. 300.

(x) Calderwood Hist. of Church of Scotl. p. 383.

ling Elders or deacons with the Imposition of hands. (y) *Piscator, Daneus, Alting, Zepperus, Polanus*, declare it to be Indifferent. So do *Baldinus, Gerbard* and other writers (of the *Lutheran* perswasion.) In some places in (z) *Germany* they use this *Rite of Imposing hands*, in the Ordination of Ministers, in Baptism, and in Confirmation, and at Marriages also, but in all as a thing *Adiaphorous*.

3. If we make the Essence of a Ministers Call to consist in his Ordination by imposition of hands from other Lawful Ministers, it will be a difficult thing to prove that our first Reformers were true Ministers of Christ. As for Ordination in the Church of *Rome*, some of them renounced it, not at all supposing themselves to be Ministers of Christ meerly on that account. They thought it was their duty, *inordinatissimam Ordinationem ejurare*, as *Beza* speaks. Some of them never had it. For they did first Preach without any formal Call or allowance of those who usurped the Title of Pastors and Bishops, and the Sole power of Ordination, and were afterwards called to the Ministry by the Churches which they had taught. *Tilenius* being demanded of the *Earl of Lavan* from whom *Calvin* had his Calling Answered, from the Church of *Geneva*, and from *Farel* his Predecessor, who had also his from the People of *Geneva*, who had Right and Authority to institute and depose Ministers. *Bellarmino* objects that the Protestants have no true Ministers among them, because they have not received Ordination by the Imposition of hands Successively from the Apostles. *Dr. Willet* in Answer thereto says, (a) *In the Corrupt times of the Gospel; the Lord has raised up Faithful Ministers to his Church that could show no Succession from the Degenerate Clergy.* They that stand upon a Lineal Succession of Ordination from the Apostles, must of necessity own the Church of *Rome* to be a true Church, and (the Bishops of *Rome*) the Ministers of *Antichrist* to be the true Ministers of Christ. For Churches to go to them for Ordained Ministers, is (says *Melancthon*) as if the sheep should go to Wolves for Shepherds. It has been well said by those

(y) In 1 Tim. 4. 14.

(z) V. Voet de pol. Eccles. part. 1. L. 2. p. 465.

(a) Synopsis Contr. 2. Q. 13. p. 81.

who have gone before us, That God does so much abhor Antichrist that he would not have his People to seek to him, nor so his Priests to Ordain Christs Ministers, as he would not sake of Babylon a Stone for a corner, nor a Stone for a Foundation. Jer. 51. 16. Whereas it is objected (says Mr. Perkins) That they who are Lawfully called are Ordained by them whose Ancestors have been Successively Ordained by the Apostles. I Answer, there is a Succession of Doctrine in which our Ministers Succeed the Apostles, and this is sufficient. If in Turkey, or America, or else where the Gospel should be received by the counsel and perswasion of private Persons, they shall not need to send to Europe for Consecrated Ministers, but they have power to chuse their own Ministers from within themselves. Thus Mr. Perkins. To the like purpose does (†) Zanchy speak. And Voetius in his Learned Book concerning the Desperate cause of Papacy, has made it as clear as the Light of the Sun, that not a Personal Succession, but a Succession in respect of Doctrine is necessary to make a true Minister of Christ.

4. There are Judicious Learned Men who conceive that others besides Ministers may Impose hands in the Ordination of Ministers. This is asserted in our platform of Discipline, which had the Approbation of many Divines as Eminent for Piety and Learning as most which this Age has produced. Nor is this which will seem a very strange Assertion to some, a notion peculiar to New-England Divines only. Others of as deep Judgment as any, whom the World has known, have maintained the same. Dr. Ames (c) says, that as the power of seeing is formally and subjectively in the Eye, yet originally in the whole Animal, so is the power of Ordination in the whole Church, and that therefore although in a well constituted Church, the Act of Ordination is to be performed by the Elders, in case duly qualified Elders are not to be had, Ordination may be performed by non-Elders. And that in a Corrupt state of the Church where Order and Ministry fails, *A plebs actus Or-*

(b) On Gal. 2. 11.

(†) In Eph. 5. ubi de Baptismo.

(c) Bellerm. enervat Tom. 2. L. 3. cap. 2.

*dinationis Legitime fieri potest*, the People may Ordain. Dr. Whitaker (d) affirms, that they that have power to Call have power to Ordain. And that the Church has power both to Call a Bishop and to Ordain him also. Not only Congregational Men, but some Presbyterians whose great Learning and Piety has made them Eminent, have said as much as is in our Platform of discipline affirmed concerning Ordination. Voetius (a) asserts, That the Church may delegate a Member of their body to Ordain a Presbyter, or may wholly omit the Solemnity of a Consecration, and that the Person chosen to the Ministry, may by virtue of his Election perform the acts belonging to his Ministerial Office. The very same is affirmed by Didoclauius. p. 242. And by Mr. Gillespy against the Ceremonies. p. 286. Also Gerson Bucer (†) maintains, that in case the Eldership should wholly fail, the power of Ordinations remains with the Church. The Defenders of this Problem alledge such Reasons for it, as deserve consideration, e. g.

1. That we read in the Scripture, of Non-Officers imposing their hands upon such as were set apart unto a sacred Office. The Levites were Ecclesiastical Officers, but the Children of Israel who imposed hands on them were not so, Numb. 8. 1c.

2. We read in the New-Testament of Ordinary Officers imposing hands on them who are Extraordinary Officers. Thus Ananias imposed hands on Paul, Act. 9. And after that, the Elders of the Church in Antioch imposed hands on Paul and Barnabas, Act. 13. 3. And not only Paul but the Elders of the Church in Ephesus imposed hands on Timothy, who was an Evangelist, and therefore an Extraordinary Officer. Now if an ordinary Officer may lay his hands on one that is Extraordinary, why may not a Non-Elder appointed there-unto by the Church, do the like to one that is only an Ordinary Presbyter? This clearly Answers what Papists and Prelates are wont to object, viz. that the Ordainer is greater than the Ordained, and that therefore none but Bishops ought to ordain or impose hands, as

(d) De pontifice Rom. Q. 2. c. 15. & de Ecclesia. Q. 5. c. 6.

(a) Desp. canj. pap. L. 2. c. 2. p. 269, 274.

(†) De Guber. Eccles. p. 262, 263.



being a degree above *Presbyters*. But was *Ananias* greater then the Apostle *Paul*? or the Ministers in the Church of *Antioch* greater then *Paul* and *Barnabas*? or the *Presbyters* in *Ephesus* greater then *Timothy*? In the beginning of the Reformation in England several who had never been Ordained *Priests* by *Bishops*, were nevertheless made *Bishops*, as it is observed in the late *Collection of State Tracts*. p. 50. Some *Councils* have allowed of the Ordination of *Bishops* in a case of necessity when *Bishops* were not at hand, by those who were no *Bishops*, but inferiors to them, which neither do some of our *Episcopal Writers* gainsay: And notwithstanding the *Council of Trent* has declared all *Secular Ordinations* to be nullities, that does not make them to be so.

3. *Imposition of hands* in Ordination is not a *Sacrament* (as many of our *Divines* have proved against the *Papist*) nor has it any Religious Significancy in it. No doubt but this *Rite* might Lawfully be used at the *Inauguration* of some *Civil Officers*, as the *Jews* from whom it is borrowed, *Imposed hands* on a *Senator* when Solemnly admitted into a great *Sabedrin*, and upon a *Doctor* in one of their *Colledges* when admitted to a *Rabbinatus* as *Alcing* (e) shows: Though sometimes they were *Promoted* without any *Imposition of hands* as *Buxtorfe* (f) out of the *Jewish Writers* informs us.

4. Mr. *Hookers* Judgment, is, that *Ordination* is not an act of *Authority* but of *Order* only. And that therefore it may be performed by *Non-Officers*. As for that *Objection* which some have thought weighty, viz. That none can give what himself has not, and that therefore Men upon whom hands were never imposed, cannot impose hands upon others, it is easily Answered, men may give that which they are not formally only virtually the Subjects of a Nation by chusing a King, give him Legal Power. A City by Chusing a Lord Mayor, make him a Magistrate. A Woman by giving her self in Marriage, causeth the Man to whom she giveth her self to have the Power of an Husband:

(e) De *Academia Hebr.*

(f) *Lexic. Thalmud.* p. 1498.

but no Man will be so absurd as to say, that a Woman has formally the power of an Husband. In former Ages the Kings of England in their Charters to Abbats and Bishops (†) gave them power to Ordain Monks and Clerks: But those Kings were not themselves Ecclesiastical Officers, or Ordained. Notwithstanding all this Discourse, I am far from approving that which has been practised in some Churches, who when Neighbour Elders were present, have improved Brethren to impose hands on their Pastors. I think it were beter to have an Ordination with Fasting and Prayer only, without any imposition of hands, (as is practised in many Congregations in England) then to have that unnecessary Ceremony performed by Non-Elders. The Old Doctrine of New-England, was, *That if the Church where Ordination is to be performed, has not Elders of its own, they should desire Neighbour Elders to assist in the Ordination of their Pastor, and that with Imposition of hands as well as with Fasting and Prayer.* Most true it is, that we read not in the New-Testament of the Imposition of hands by Non-Elders, because then Elders were not wanting to perform that Service, and to make use of Non-Elders in this affair, when Elders might be obtained is not decent, nor approved of by those great Divines that do not absolutely deny the Lawfulness of such a practice. I shall only add, that Daneus, in his Commentary on 1 Tim. 5. 22. p. 361. does not only maintain that, imposition of hands is not a necessary Ceremony in the Constitution of a Minister, but says, that it is *Futility* to do as the Papists do. in making the *Essence* of a Legitimate vocation to the Ministry, to consist therein, and that to make it a Question, *whether the same person may receive imposition of hands more then once,* is to propose a *vain and inept Question*, because it is not material whether it be ever done at all.

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(†) *V. Malmesbury de Gest. Reg. Angl. L. 2. c. 7, 8.*

## QUESTION XIII

**MAY** a Man be Ordained a Pastor, Except to a particular Church, and in the presence of that Church?

*Ans.* There are two parts of this Question which we shall Answer distinctly.

1. We assert that no Man ought to be Ordained a Pastor, Except unto a particular Church. For,

1. We have no Instance in the Scripture of ordinary Officers Ordained, Except unto a particular Flock, *Act. 14. 23. They Ordained Elders by Election* (so does the *Geneva* Translation read the words truly enough, as that Learned Knight, Sir Norton Knatebull (+) has critically evinced) in every Church. Paul left it in Charge with Titus, that he should Ordain Elders in every City. *Tit. 1. 5.* He was not to Ordain them to be *Individua vaga*, but a particular place, a City wherein some Church was assigned to them to Labour in. He might not (as Mr. Baynes and from him (g) *Didoclavius* speaks) Ordain Elders as the University Creates Doctors of Physick, without assigning them any Patients, or as they make Masters of Art, without providing for them any Scholars.

2. Pastor and Flock are relatives, and therefore one cannot be without the other. It is contrary to the Rules of Reasons (as Logicians know) that the *Relate* should be without its *Correlate*. (h) To say that a *Wandering Levite* who has no Flock is a Pastor, is as good sense as to say, that he that has no Children is a Father, and that the Man who has no Wife is a Husband. Nor may it be pretended that the *Catholick Church* is his Flock. For (not to insist on the common Protestant Doctrine that the *Catholick Church* is *Invisible*: as comprehending all true Believers from *Abel* to the End of the World.)

3. A Pastor is under an Obligation to feed every one that is of the Flock which he is a Pastor unto. *Act. 20. 28.*

(+) In *Animadu. in. Libr. N. T.*

(g) *Altare Damascen. p. 209.*

(h) *Voet. de desper. causa papatus. p. 233.*

Take heed therefore to your selves, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you Overseers. Is any meer Man able to feed all that Flock of the Church Catholick Visible? A Minister must give an account concerning every Soul in that Flock which he is the Pastor of. Heb. 13. 17. They that say they are Pastors of the Catholick Church, may do well to think, what account they can give of the ten thousand of Souls belonging to their Flock, that were never instructed nor fed by them.

4. Supposing a Man to have a particular Church to which he is related, if he is a Pastor to other Churches besides that, then it is not in the power of that Church to deprive him of his Pastoral Office. If they should reject him and that deservedly from being their Pastor, he may pretend, I am a Pastor of the Catholick Church, and will be so, do you do your worst. This favours of the Papists *indelible Character*, who pretended that if a Man has been once Ordained, he can never be a *Lai*c again. Then a person who is justly not only deposed from his Office, but Excommunicated, may be a Pastor still. And if so, then he that is not so much as a Member of the Visible Church, may yet be a Pastor of the Church Catholick, for one justly Excommunicate, is no longer of Christ's Visible Kingdom, being Authoritatively declared to belong unto Satan. Our Discipline declares not only that such as never were related to a particular Flock, but such as have been, but now are not so related, to be no Church Officers. The words in the Platform, Ch. 9. S. 7. Are, *He that is clearly loosed from his Office relation unto that Church whereof he was a Minister, cannot be looked at as an Officer, nor perform any act of Office in any other Church, unless he be again orderly called unto Office.*

5. When Ordinations at large did with other Corruptions creep into the Churches, a whole Synod found it necessary not only to bear witness against that practice, but to declare such Ordinations to be void and null, and the Ordainers liable to Censure. It is well observed by the Ingenious Writer of the History of the Council of Trent (i)

(i) *Hist. Irid. Conc. L. 6. p. 550.*

that in the Golden Times of Christianity, no Persons were Ordained but to a particular Ministry; but that this pious Institution was soon Corrupted, Bishops Ordaining Men that had no Election by any Church. This caused great Confusion as the Megdeburgensien Historians have noted. As a Remedy, the Council of Calcedon made a decree against all such Ordinations. The Sixth Canon of that Synod declares, *That if any Man shall be Ordained absolutely, that is to the Catholick without relation to a particular Church, the Imposition of hands which he has received shall be null, and that he shall not serve in the Church, to the dishonour of them that have Ordained him.* This Decree was Confirmed by other Synods afterwards, so that it became a general Rule in the Church, that no Man should be Ordained without a Title. But the forementioned Historian (with many others) takes notice that this Rule was in process of time perverted. For whereas at first to have a Title was to have a particular Church, afterwards to have a Title was to have Money. The Canons of the Church of England will not permit any one to be Ordained without a Title, but they too much comply with the Papists in allowing those to have Titles who have none, such as the Calcedonian Council intended.

6. The impleaded Ordinations are contrary to Judgment of our Eminent Divines, and to the practice of some of the best Reformed Churches. Junius (k) declares his Approbation of the mentioned Canon of the Calcedon Synod: And that since an Elder is not Ordained to the Ministry absolutely, but to the Ministry of this or that Church in particular, it is fit that the Church should be concerned in the Ordination. And that in the Apostolical Times in the Ordination of a Minister, there was first a *Cheirotonia* or Election by the People, and then a *Cheirothesia* or imposition of hands; That these two were always joyned together as the Antecedent and Consequent. Mr. (l) Cartwright says, that after Election follows Ordination, which is a Solemn investing or putting a Minister into the Possession of that Office whereunto he was before Chosen. To

(k) Animadvers. in Bellarm. Contrum. 5. cap. 3. &c. 7.

(l) 2d Reply p. 272.

the like purpose does Dr. *Whitaker* speak ; It is needless, and would be endless to heap up Testimonies concerning this, since it is a common received opinion amongst our Divines, ( we must always except prelati- cal ones ) that the Election of a Minister by the Church should precede his Ordination. One of the Articles of the Ecclesiastical Discipline of the French Protestants, is, Ministers shall not be Ordained without Assigning them a particular Flock. So in the Kirk of Scotland, one Article of their Polity is (m) All Office bearers should have their own particular Flocks, amongst whom they Exercise their particular Charge ; as I find it Expressed by Mr. *Calderwood*. That Learned (n) Author disapproveth of the Impleaded Ordinations, because they make a Man to be a Minister only *Inpotentia*, but not in *actu*. Indeed Mr. *Rutherford* has such strange words as these, It is presupposed that A. B. is Ordained a Pastor before the People can Elect him for their Pastor. Mr. *Hooker* replies to him, that he finds *Bellarmino* speaking just after that manner, which caused Dr. *Ames* to tell him, that he disputed preposterously, and did set the Cart before the Horse, when he placed Ordination before Election. But notwithstanding Mr. *Rutherford* in that particular Notion deserts the Common Protestant Doctrine, in another place he has these words, A Pastor is only the Pastor of that Flock over which the Holy Ghost by the Churches Authority has set him as their Pastor, yet so as when he Preacheth in another Congregation, he ceaseth not to be a Pastor of that Flock ; in saying which he yields the cause wholly as Mr. (o) *Hooker* tells him. So then we are now agreed. I shall only add, that the United Brethren in London declare that ordinarily, None shall be Ordained to the work of the Ministry, but such as are called and chosen thereunto by a particular Church. And that Learned Presbyterian Mr. *Gillespy* affirms, (†) That Ordination ought to be given to him only who is Elected, and that because he is Elected.

As for the other part of the Question, Whether Ordination

(m) See the History of the Church of Scotland. p. 105.

(n) *Altare damasc.* p. 209.

(o) Survey of Church Discipline. p. 2. p. 61.

(†) *Engl. vot. Cere. part. 3. chap. 8.*



ought not to be performed in the presence of that Church where the Minister is to Serve? The Answer is, That Ordinarily it ought to be. The Ordinations which we read of in the Scripture were so. If a People who are remote from all Ministers sit to Ordain, desire one whom they have Elected to be Ordained for them in another Land, by a Solemn Separation of him to that Service of Christ, with Fasting and Prayer and Imposition of hands; that's a rare case, and I know not why in such a case there may not be an Ordination though the Church is not (because they cannot be present.) But if there are Elders in the place where the Minister is to dispense the Mysteries of the Gospel, for him to receive Ordination not in the presence of his Church, is irregular and contrary to the Scripture Example. In the Primitive Times of Christianity, Ordinations were performed not only with the Consent, but in the presence of the Church, yea, of the whole Church in which any Pastor was to Preside. Cyprian (\*) affirms that no Ordination is rightly performed except the People to whom the Pastor is Ordained be present: He declares this to be according to the Doctrine and Practice of the Apostles. In the third Century it was thus practised both in the Asian, and in the African Churches. Thus was Origen (p) Ordained. And another instead of Narcissus who was with-drawn from his Pastoral care of the Church in those days in Jerusalem. The Megdeburgenses (q) in their Ecclesiastical History note, that if any Bishop was to be Ordained, they sent (not to Ministers in another Province a Thousand Miles distant but) to Neighbour Pastors for their Approbation, *Conveniebant fratres omnes* (say they) all the Brethren came together, and when the Election was over, they proceeded to an Ordination with the Imposition of hands, *Prasente universo populo*, in the presence of all the People. Thus also it is amongst the Reformed Churches in France. There was a Time when some young Scholars of the French Nation, having had their Education in the University of Leyden in Holland, received Ordination from the hands of Dutch Di-

(\*) L. 1. Epist. 4.

(p) V. Euseb. L. 6. c. 8, 10.

(q) Cent. 3. cap. 6. p. mibi. 94, 102.

vines, at which the Presbyterians in France were dissatisfied: For which cause the Synod at Gergean in the year 1601. made it one of their decrees, (r) That Letters be written to the Doctors and Professors of Divinity, in the University of Leyden, intreating them not to Ordain the French Protestants Students in their University; but when they have finished their Course of Theology, to send them into France, that here being called to the Ministry, they may receive imposition of hands in the face of our Churches.

#### QUESTION XIV.

**I**s the Practice of the Churches of New-England in granting Letters of Recommendation or Dismissal from one Church to another, according to Scripture and the Example of other Churches?

*Ans.* It is so. See *Act.* 18. 27. *Rom.* 16. 1, 2. That this was an usual Practice in the Churches in the Apostolical Times, is plain from 1 *Cor.* 16. 3. and 3. 1. *Col.* 4. 10, 11. 3 *Joh.* 3. 8, 9, 10. This practice was continued in the Churches after the Apostolical Times. Polycarp in his Epistle to the Church at *Philippi* recommends *Crescens* with their Sister to their Communion, testifying that their Conversation had been blameless. The Greek Churches called such Letters as the Scriptures do *Synsttick Epistles* or Letters of Recommendation. In the Latine Churches they were called *Litteræ Communicatoriæ*. *Tertullian* calls them *Litteræ pacis*. That in the Primitive Times such Letters were in use may be seen in (s) *Baronius*. And that something of this nature was practised in the Fourth Century is manifest from a decree of the first Council in *Carthage*, (t) That no one shall Communicate in another Church without a Letter from the Bishop of his own Church. *Nazianzen* in one of his Orations against *Julian* the Apostate speaks of these Letters. And several Ancient Synods make

(r) See Mr. Quicks Synodicon.

(s) *Tom.* 2. Anno. 142.

(t) *Magdeb. cent.* 4. c. 9. p. 402.

mention both of *Literal Commendatitia*, and *Literæ dimissoria*. And some of the Protestant Reformed Churches practice as the Churches of *New-England* do as to this matter. So in (u) *France*. And in *Holland* several of their Synods have Commanded this practice of the Churches, that when persons remove from one Church to another, in order to their partaking at the *Lords Table*, they should bring Letters Testimonial with them. Some of their greatest Divines have written in Defence of it. Dr. *Hornbeck* (w) Commends the Churches of *New-England* for this their Profession and practice. The famous *Gilbert Voetius* who has been esteemed the most Learned Man in the World; In Answer to that Question, *Whether in the Translation of Members from one Church to another, Letters Dimissory and Testimonial are not requisite?* Answers, (x) *Ita habet ordo Ecclesiasticus & laudabili more obtinet in Ecclesiis Belgicis.* Ecclesiastical order requires that it should be so. And this Laudable custom obtains in the *Dutch Churches*. He giveth divers Reasons for it.

1. Such Letters will serve instead of a new Examination and Tryal which is necessary when persons are first Admitted into the Church.

2. Because otherwise Churches may be imposed upon, so as to receive Members who are unfit, and it may be under offence in the Churches from whence they come.

3. To receive the Members of another Church without the Approbation of that Church to which they do belong, is the way to make difference in Churches, and to set them one against another. Thus that Learned Man. Granting of *Letters Testimonial* was practised in the Churches in *Guernsey* when first Reformed: Their Ecclesiastical Discipline was the Composure of the famous *Thomas Cartwright* (as the Minister in that Island assured me, when I had my Conversation amongst them many years since) Now one Article of their Discipline is, *That there shall not be received to the Lords Supper any one of other Parishes, without Good Testimony from his Pastor, or of two of the Elders where*

(u) *V. La. Roque. p. 145.*

(w) *In Epist. ad Durcum. p. 111.*

(x) *De pol. Eccles. part. 1. c. 4. p. 67.*

*there is no Minister.* Although it is true, that no Church ought to be made a Prison. It is nevertheless a Sin for any Church Member to leave that Church where the Providence of God has set him without just cause. It is a Violation of his Church Covenant. The removal of a Member from a Church does tend to the weakning of that Church. If one may depart without just reason, why not another, and a third, and ten, twenty, and more, until the Church is in a manner dissolved. And therefore tis rational that if Members of Churches desire to remove their Relation to another Church, they should acquaint their own Church with their desires, and the reason thereof, that so if they are justifiable, they may have a *Loving Dismission*, but if otherwise, that they may be *Convinced* of their Error, and desist from their purpose. It is no sign of Wisdom for a Man so to abound in his own sense, as not to ask the Advice of others (the Church especially to which he is related) in a matter of such moment, *Prov. 11. 14. & 12. 15.* Letters of Dismission are requisite that so it may be known that his departure is not offensive. By the Letters in Controversy nothing else is intended, *but Letters Testimonial from some Church of Christ, or the Elders thereof, Concerning some of their Communion removing from them to another People, be it for lesser or longer Time.* The sorts of these Letters are divers according to the Occasions of the person for whom they are written. It is only for distinction sake that some are called Letters of *Dismission*, others Letters of *Recommendation*. For if we speak exactly, both of them are Letters of *Recommendation*, containing some Testimonials for the parry, and both of them are Letters of *Dismission*, as signifying that he goeth with the consent of the Church, whether it be with a purpose to return, or for continuance with those unto whom he is going. In the *Heads of Agreement* assented to by our Presbyterian and Congregational Brethren in London, These are some, *That a Visible professor joyned to a Particular Church, ought to continue steadfastly with the said Church, and not forsake the Ministry and Ordinances there dispensed, without an orderly seeking a Recommendation to another Church.* Again they say, *We ought not to Admit any one to be a Member of our*

respective Congregations that has joyned himself to another, without Endeavours of Mutual Satisfaction of the Congregations concerned.

QUESTION XV.

**I**S not the asserting that a Pastor may Administer the Sacrament to another Church besides his own Particular Flock, at the desire of that other Church, a declension from the First Principles of New-England and of the Congregational Way?

*Ans.* Not at all. For our Platform of Church Discipline does not at all contradict it, but rather approve of it, Chapt. 15. S. 4. And Yome of the First Eminent Ministers in New-England have defended the Lawfulness of such a practice. So Mr. Norton in his answer to Apollony, Mr. Shepard of Cambridge, and Mr. Allin of Dedham in their Answer to Mr. Ball. And my Father in a Letter of his to Mr. Hooker, bearing Date Nov. 6. 1645. Giveth such Reasons for it as are not easie to be Answered. Dr. Goodwin who was a Pillar amongst Congregationals, declares his Judgment fully in the Affirmative, and this not only in a Letter written not long before his Translation to Glory, of which I have elsewhere given an account, but in his Discourse of Church Government, in the fourth Volume lately published, which was written long before that Letter, and wherein he shews that such an occasional Exercise of Ministerial Power in another Church at their Request, will not Infer any such Jurisdiction as that which the Presbyterian Brethren plead for. We shall for the satisfaction of those that have not that Book of the Doctors, cause his words to be Transcribed. He thus speaks, (y) It is one thing that there may Occasionally be an Exercising of an Elders Power in another Congregation, and it is another thing that it would be assumed and challenged; which is the thing that remains further to be approved by the Presbyteria

## The Order of the Churches

Divines. As it is one thing for a Child under Age, tho' he should not Govern himself, to have Liberty to chuse a Guardian for the Time, but it is another thing that a Company of Men should assume to be his Guardians for ever. It will be one thing for a Corporation to send another Corporation for their Recorder, a Man skilful in the Law, to perform the Office of a Recorder with a Jury at their Session, they now wanting one, or there falling out a Case of difficulty, wherein their own does need Assistance; but it will be another thing for the Recorders of several Corporations in a County to go and challenge by vertue of Association, and the Common Law of Communion in the Kingdom a constant power of Jurisdiction to be Exercised over them.

And in this case the Communion of Churches in respect of Members *Qua* Members, and of Elders. *Qua* Elders answer one another, according to our principles. For as the Members of another Church, if they come to a particular Church, and are received by their Consent by them, and so for that Time become as one body with them, by vertue thereof they receive the Sacrament amongst them, as being for this Act incorporated, and as one bread with them occasionally, in this do not receive meerly and simply as Members of another Church, distinctly and a part considered, altho' by vertue of their being Members of another Church, but they are thereby for that Time occasionally received into that Church *ad tantum* so far as to Enjoy such and such a priveledge, so as the Sacrament in this, is not said to be given to the Members of two Churches apart considered, but to one Church as thus making one, tho' upon a different respect; and so it is also in their receiving Elders (if we may make that supposition) to perform Acts of Eldership occasionally, they do it not in this single and apart Consideration that they are simply Elders of other Churches, as if considered only as such they may make a Consistory met out of this Church to be over this Church, and so Excommunicate, but they come to and are present in and with that Church, being called by them, and received as Elders for that Act, and for that Time as one with them.



so as the Acts which they do perform are Acts of that Church, or of Elders in that Church, and are not to be considered as Acts of other Elders that have no power over that Church. Thus far Dr. Goodwin. And that this accords with the Judgment of Congregational Divines, and was also practised in the next Ages to the Apostles, when *Polyarp* Pastor of the Church in *Smyrna* administered the Sacrament to the then Church of Saints in *Rome*, I have more fully declared in an Answer to this Question, which was printed in the Year, 1693. And thus it was practised in the Churches of *New-England* in their beginning Times. For when Mr. *Wilson*, Pastor of the only Church then in *Boston*, was absent from his Flock in a Voyage for *England*, Mr. *Phillips*, Pastor of the Church in *Watertown*, administered the Lords Supper to the Church in *Boston*. This was above Threescore Years since. And thus did Mr. *Eliot*, (a zealous Man for the Order of the Gospel, professed in our Platform of Discipline) practice Forty years ago in the *Indian Churches*.

## QUESTION XVI.

*IS it a Duty for Christians in their Prayers to make use of the words of that which is commonly called the Lords Prayer?*

*Ans.* It cannot be proved that this is a duty. The Question is not whether it is Lawful to make use of those words in Prayer. No Man can rationally doubt, but that the words in that as well as the words of other Prayers in the Scripture may be made use of in our Addresses to heaven. The Rigid Separatists will not deny this. Mr. *Aynsworth* says, (a) *We hold it Good and Holy to use aright any of the Lords Prayers, or any words of Scripture, or those or any of those Petitions taught us in Matth. 6. or Luk. 11. in the words of either Evangelists, or other words as the Spirit of God which helps us to Pray, leadeth us to any of them. Like-*

(a) *V. Mr. Pagets Arrow against Separation. p. 4, 63.*

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wife Mr. Robinson (b) who was a Rigid Separatist until Dr. Ames convinced him of his Error therein. He says, *We hold it Lawful to use those very words in our Prayers, all, or any part of them, if we be thereunto Guided by the Holy Spirit in whom we must always Pray, and by whose help we must make our Request unto God.* Doubtless then Congregational Men will concede as much as this cometh to. Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs ( a famous Divine of the Congregational Perswasion ) once when he Preached his *Expository Lectures*, was prevented from coming to the Assembly exactly at the Hour appointed. If he should at that time have enlarged in Prayer as he usually did, the Auditors would have been detained longer then they expected. Nor was he willing to begin his Exposition without any Prayer at all, he therefore began it with only praying in the words of the *Lords Prayer*. This report I believe; for my most Dear and Honourable Friend Dr. William Bates, late Pastor of a Church in Hackney near London ( whom for Honours sake I mention ) assured me that he was then present, and an Ear Witness of what I have now related. But the Question is, Whether this is necessary: Not whether a Minister may without Sin make use of the words of the *Lords Prayer*, but whether he Ought to do it, and Consequently shall be guilty of Sin if he does it not. The Question being so stated we defend the Negative. Let it be consider'd,

1. That our Saviours words are, *After this manner pray ye.* Mat. 6. 9. Whence Austin (c) concludes, that Christ taught his Disciples not what words they should use in Prayer, but what thing they should pray for. To the same purpose does Beda speak. And this also is the sense of Calvin, Musculus, Piscator, Bertram, and of Grotius himself, that our Saviour did not intend that His Disciples were bound to recite these words in Prayer, nor should He tie them to the use of Syllables. Nor indeed is it probable that our Lord in the midst of his Sermon would prescribe a Form of Words to his Disciples. Whence Mr. Joseph Mede ( a great conformist ) concludes, (d) That

(b) In his Answer to Mr. Bernard. p. 469.

(c) Lib. de Magistro cap. 1.

(d) See his Works. Fol. 2.

when these words were first uttered, the Disciples understood not that their Master intended it for a Form of Prayer, but for a Pattern of Example only. He that prays for any thing not contained in that Platform of Prayer, does not pray after that manner, but he that does with Faith pray for the things comprehended therein, although he should not use one Expression in it, but other words importing that sense, does truly Pray after that manner. It is pleaded that in Luke the words are *When you pray, say*; but that may well be interpreted not as intending say these words, but these things in your prayers: So does Grotius give the sense of them. When Moses was charged, *Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, &c. Exod. 4. 22.* He did not think that he was obliged to say those very words, only to Express that thing. Nor did he in delivering his Message tie himself to those words and syllables. The like may be here affirmed. Moreover, most of those that do Say the Lords Prayer, do not say as 'tis in Luke.

2. The two Evangelists in their Reciting that Prayer have not the same words. Whence we conclude, that it was given only as a Platform or Directory for prayer, and not as a Form which we may not vary from. In Luke there is no Amen concluding the Prayer, nor any Doxology, besides the words both in the fourth and in the fifth Petition, are not just the same words with those in Matthew. Now if the meaning of Pray after this manner, and of when you pray, say, is, that we are in duty bound to use those words and syllables as a Form, whose Form must we follow? whether that of Matthew, which is part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount? or that in Luke which was taught the Disciples in another place, and on another occasion, near upon a year and half after the Former? Dr. Lightfoot (d) tells us, that the Jews concluded their Prayers in Synagogues, and private Houses with saying Amen; but that they never said Amen in the Temple, but instead thereof, they concluded with saying these Words, *Blessed be Name of the Glory of his Kingdom for ever and ever.* I remember a Jewish Rabbi says, that those words were the usual Prayer of their Father

(d) in vol. 2. fol. 1138.

*Jacob*, but the *Doctor* thinks that the *Doxology* is omitted in *Luke*, and added in *Matthew*, to instruct us that we should use this Form, both in Publick and in Private. Yet this Answers not the Question which of these Forms is to be used; which of them in Publick, and which in Private? If we must keep exactly to the *Jewish* mode of worship, the Form in *Matthew* must not be used in the *Cathedral* which answers to the Temple, because it concludes with *Amen*. Nor must the Form in *Luke*, because it wants the *Doxology*, which is peculiar to the Temple. The Gospel does not require nor approve of *Judaizing* in Christians.

3. That Common Argument, (however slighted by Mr. *Paget* (c) which many have produced to prove, that the Formal usage of the Lords Prayer, is not Commanded, deserves further Consideration, viz. because *then it would be unlawful to vary at all from those words and Syllables*. When it is said, *Pray thus*, and *when you Pray, say*, those words of our Saviour, are not a *Permission* but an absolute *Commandment*. *When you Pray*, that is, *Whenever you pray*. As, *when you give Alms*, is as much as to say, *whenever you give Alms*. Thus *whenever a Christian prays*, he must pray after that manner which Christ in his Sermon on the Mount perscribed. If therefore the meaning of *Pray thus*, is, use these very words, it would not be Lawful at any time to vary from them. Which no Man will be so unreasonable as to affirm. It would be less proper for a Christian in his Closet to speak in the plural number. Indeed the Superstitious Jews made a Cannon, that their *Compendious Prayer*, which they call *Majan*, *q. d.* a *Fountain Prayer*, and require their Disciples to say it Eighteen times every day, shall be expressed in the plural number, though he that says it has no Man with him, and they make him Guilty of Sin that shall Pray that Prayer in the singular number though in his Closet, because he must never look on himself as Separated from the Synagogue. But does any Man believe, that if a Christian shall say, *give me my daily bread*, *forgive my debts*, *lead not me into Temptation*, *deliver me from evil*, that he offends by not speaking

(c) *Ubi Supra*. p. 74.

plurally in the very Syllables of the Lords Prayer? It would be so, if the design of the precepta were to tye us up to Words and Syllables.

4. There are few of those who use the *Lords Prayer*, that keep to the words either of *Matthew* or of *Luke* in their saying of it, For in the *Fifth Petition* they vary therefrom. The words in *Matthew* are, *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*, *Matth. 6. 12.* The words in *Luke* are, *Forgive us our Sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us*, *Luk. 11. 4.* Whenas they that say the *Lords Prayer* use the words which are in the *Liturgy*, viz. *Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that trespass against us.* It will be said, that is the same thing though not the same words with the other. But this is to give up the cause, since our Question is not concerning things but words. Moreover, by this small alteration of the words a Great Truth, viz. *That our Sins are our Debts*, is lost. *Cyprian* is justly blamed for making a little change in the *Sixth petition*, for he expresseth it, *Ne patiaris nos induci, &c. Suffer us not to be led into Temptation*, whereby a great and mysterious Truth, respecting the Activity of Providence in Leading Men into Temptation is obscure. They that pretend they are bound in Conscience to use the *Lords Prayer* as a *Form*, and so to keep exactly to the words therein contained, are not able to Extricate themselves from this Argument against them. Nor can I give any reason why they express the *Fifth Petition* as they commonly do, excepting this, that they have taken their use of the *Lords Prayer*, not out of the *Bible* but out of the *Common Prayer Book*.

5. It cannot be proved that either *Christ* or his *Apostles* did use this Prayer as a *Form*. A most Heavenly Prayer made by our Saviour, is recited in the 17th of *John*, but He did not conclude with the words of this Prayer: We find in *Acts 1. 24.* and in *Act. 4. 24.* That the *Apostles* prayed in Church-Meetings, but not that they did either begin or conclude with the recitation of the *Lords Prayer*. *Durandus* (f) boldly affirms, That the *Apostles* Consecrated

(f) *Rationale Divin. Li. 4. c. 1. & cap. 47.*

the *Eucharist*, by repeating the words of Institution, and super-adding the Lords Prayer. And that *Peter* did at first so Celebrate that Ordinance in the Oriental Parts where he Resided for the space of four years. I doubt not but that this is as true, as what he further says, that afterwards that Apostle caused *three Prayers more to be added to the Mass*. There is no more proof that the Apostles any of them used to say the Lords Prayer, then there is that the *Liturgy* fathered on *James* was written by him; the vanity whereof has been sufficiently discovered by our Protestant Divines. That Incomparable Divine and *Casuisst*, Dr. *Ames*, (†) judgeth, that we may conclude that the Lords Prayer was not given as a Form but as a Platform, *because the Scripture says nothing of the Apostles so using it*. Neither do the Apostles or Evangelists in any of their Writings Exhort Christians unto the formal usage of that Holy Directory for prayer. Nor do we read any thing of that matter in the next Age after the Apostles. *Eusebius* (g) has recorded an Excellent Prayer made by *Polycarp* when he Suffered *Martyrdom*; but although he prayed after that manner which the Lords Prayer requires, there is not one sentence of that prayer in his. *Justin Martyr* gives an account of what was practised in the Assemblies of Christians in those days, viz. of their Reading the Scriptures, Preaching thereon, Prayers, Administration of Baptism and the Lords Supper, but has not the least hint of their using to repeat the Lords Prayer, which had it then been Customary, no doubt he would have mentioned it as he does some other things which were deviations from the Apostolical Practice, particularly that of sending the *Eucharist* to such as were absent. It is true, that in the *third Century*, the Lords prayer was used in some of the Assemblies of Christians, yet not in all of them, only when the *Communicants* were by themselves alone: They never repeated that prayer if any that were only *Catechumens* hapned to be present. Nor might (h) such use it until they were baptised. They supposed it unlawful for Unregenerates to call God their

(†) *Cas. Conf. L. 4. c. 17.*

(g) *L. 4 c. 15.*

(h) *Hanc orationem baptizati orant August Epist. 54.*



Father. The Writings of *Austin* (i) *Chrysostom* and others of the Ancients have made this indisputable. There is an expression in *Tertullian* (k) from whence some have gathered, that in those days Christians did not *Conclude* but *Begin* their prayers with *the Lords Prayer*. Nevertheless, they did not think it necessary. It is evident that *Origen* did sometimes use this prayer; but without an opinion of its being necessary. For when he writes concerning a method of prayer, he adviseth to begin and end with *Doxologies*: but he does not advise to begin or to end with the *Lords Prayer*. *Clemens Alexandrinus* concludes his last Book of *Pedagogy* with Prayer, yet not with the *Lords Prayer*. This enervates what Mr. *Richard Ward* and others object, viz. That if the *Lords Prayer*, was given only to be a rule, and not enjoyned as a form, then Christians for 1500 years together did not understand the true meaning of *Mat. 6. 9*. But suppose that an hundred years after the Apostles were all dead, *this Formality* had been generally practised, we could not from thence infer, that it was so in their days. *Innovations* and *Declensions* from the *Primitive Purity* were soon brought in unawares amongst the Churches. In *Tertullians* Time, they *Prayed towards the East*. *Origen* also adviseth it; but the Apostles never gave that Advice. In those days they used *Exorcisms*, *signing with the Cross*, and *Chrism* in Baptism. All which things were Corruptions in Religion, and are now rejected by most of the Reformed Churches. In those Times also, they put especial respect on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, which in *Tertullian* are called *Stationum dies*. Because Christ was Sold on a *Wednesday*, and Crucified on a *Friday* they would have more devotion on those then on other days in the week. These were *Early Superstitions*. And although we read nothing of their keeping the Feast of *Christ's Nativity* for more then an hundred years after this; nevertheless, *Whitsunday* and *Pentecost* was observed in Commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles. Also *Lent* and *Easter* were accounted Sacred Times. The observation of *Easter* was as ancient as

(i) In *Matth. Homil. 18.* and 2 *Cor. Homil. 2.*

(k) *Premissa Legitima oratione Tertull. de orat. p. 659.*

Polycarp, who was the Disciple of the Apostle John. Presently after Polycarp, Christians used every year to observe a day in Commemoration of the *Death Days*, which they call the *Birth Days* of their Martyrs. I have mentioned these particulars to show, that the Argument from the *practice* of Churches after the Apostles Days, is not conclusive, except it can be proved that the *Scripture* does warrant such a practice, and then it is *ex abundantia*, recommended to us; 1 Cor. 11. 16.

6. Other Arguments besides that of *Ancient Custom* which are commonly alledged for using the *Lords Prayer* as a *Form*, do not carry Conviction with them. It is pleaded, that our Prayers are Imperfect, whenas this Form contains in it all that we are to pray for, therefore to make up the *Defects* of our Prayers, we must subjoyn this. To which has been replied, that the *Decalogue* does contain in it, all the Duties which God requires of Men, *Matth.* 22. 40. But it does not therefore follow that Ministers should conclude their Imperfect Sermons, with a *Recitation* of the *Ten Commandments*. No more are they bound to a *Repetition* of the *Lords Prayer*, at the Conclusion of their own imperfect ones. Moreover, we may not think that *Words and Syllables* will make amends for the *Defect* of our Prayers; for that is (as shall be further said) to give to them what is proper to the *Merit* and *Intercession* of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also pretended that every *Rabbi* or *Master* amongst the Jews delivered a *Form* of Prayer, to his Disciples. That *John Baptist* did so: And that in *Conformity* hereunto, the Disciples Petitioned Christ to give them a *Form*, which he granted their desires in: And that he took every *Sentence* of this which we call the *Lords Prayer* out of the Jews Common Prayer-Book at that time used amongst them, and willed his Disciples to use it as a *Form*. Thus do some say. And all this is sooner said than proved. Some have told us of things in the *Jewish Rituals* which others could never find there. *Baronius*, *Casaubon* and many besides, say, that it was usual amongst the Jews to wash their feet before they sat down to eat the *Passover*, and that therefore what is recorded, *Joh.* 13. 5. was nothing but a Jewish custom used at the *Passover*.

Yet Buxtorf- (who was as much conversant in the Writings of the Jews as any Man in the world) says, that if a Man reads over all their Ritual Books, and the whole Talmud besides, he will not find any such thing therein. Other particulars relating to the Administration of the Lords Supper, are by Genebrard, Scaliger, (with many more) pretended to be in imitation of what is in the Jewish Rituals, whom the Learned Reader may see refuted by Buxtorf in his Dissertation de *Cana Dominica*. The like to this may be affirmed with respect to the Subject before us. But supposing (which yet remains to be demonstrated) the Disciples were to use this prayer as a Form whilst they continued under the Jewish Pedagogy, it cannot from thence be concluded that Believers under the New-Testament are bound so to use it. There are some Learned Men that do allow the Lords Prayer to have been a prescribed Form, that do not think it to be designed for a perpetual use of the Church as such, but only for a Temporary Form. And that after our Lords Resurrection and Ascension, they should no longer use it as a Form, because therein is no express mention of the name of Christ, nor asking Blessings for his sake, nor ascribing praises to God through him, which after his accomplishing the work of Redemption, ought to be. Thus do they interpret that Scripture, *Joh. 16. 24*. However it does not follow, that if a Form were proper and needful for the Jews, that such things are necessary for Christians in the days of the Gospel, wherein there is a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit of prayer, *Zech. 12. 10*. We say not that all Forms are unlawful. No doubt but that a Man who has not the gift of prayer, had better make use of a Form of his own composing or taken out of some good Book, (but I would not advise to take one out of the Mass-Book) to worship God with, in his Family, then not to have any Religious Worship at all therein. But if that Man shall afterwards be blessed with a Gift of Prayer, for him to rye himself to a Form is (as useth to be said) like as if one that has used Crutches whilst he was weak, should continue to use them after he has gained strength. What Liturgies the Jews had whilst they were yet the Church of God, we know not. Nor is there any great Credit to be given to what their Rabbins

who are made up of Fables, shall think mees to tell us, Some of themselves confess that Forms of Prayer were not always used by their Fathers. *Saubertus* in his late Learned *Academical Disquisitions*, Cites a passage of *R. Bechai*, (m) who sayeth, That from the time of *Moses* until the Great *Sanedrim*, there was no ordinary Form of Prayer amongst the *Israelites*, but every Man made a prayer for himself, according to what knowledge and gift of utterance he was endued with. If the Jews had Prayer Books of *Humane Composure* in our Saviours Time, (as our *Liturgical Men* are perswaded) it is too much boldness to Conjecture that the Lord borrowed the Petitions in the *Lords Prayer* from them. What though *Grotius*, (\*) and others find Expressions like those, in *Jews Prayer Books*? It does not necessarily follow, that they were taken from thence. *Dr. Lightfoot* (n) chargeth the Jews with *Filching* out of the Gospel, particularly that they have Stolen those words, *Thy Kingdom come.* and those, *Lead us not into Temptation*, and inserted them into their *Liturgies*. This seems more probable, then that the Lord should take his Prayer out of their Service Books. It was counted *Blasphemy* in *Celsus* when he affirmed, that *Christ* borrowed many of his Divine Notions out of *Plato*. *Mr. Boyse* mentions an horrid Assertion of *Dr. Combers* in his pretended Answer to *Mr. Clarksons* unanswerable discourse of *Liturgies*. viz. That our Saviour was so afraid of *Innovation* as to take every Sentence of the *Lords Prayer* out of the *Jewish Forms* then in use. In that degenerate Age was he afraid to teach any thing that would seem *New* to them! How then did some who heard him Preach, say, *What New Doctrine is this?* *Mar. 1. 27.* Was the Lord who did so often reprove them for their Formality in Worship, Afraid of *Innovation* if they should change their *Vain Conversation* received by Tradition from their Fathers? Was that admirable *Directory* for prayer, which none but he who is the *Wisdom of God* could be the Author of, all borrowed out of *Jewish Common Prayer-Books*, devised by no Man knows who? *Credat Judeus*

(m) *V. Saubert Palastra*. p. 123.

(\*) *V. D. Taylors duſtor dubit. Lib. 2. c. 3. R. 15.*

(n) *Jah. 1. p. 1003.*

7. That many have *Superstitiously* abused this blessed portion of Scripture, cannot be denied. They have set up the *Lords Prayer* in the room of *Christ* himself, imagining that God will accept of their other *Petitions* for the sake of their repeating this *Form*, as if that would *Sanctifie* and make amends for the *defects* in their prayers, which to do belongs to the *Mediator*, nor can any thing else do it. The Judicious *Alting* (o) giveth this caution. *That in using the Lords Prayer Men should be careful of Superstition, in thinking that there is a Latent Efficacy in words and Syllables.* Papists will say their *Pater Noster* more often in an hour, then the Jews do their *Majan* prayer in a day, superstitiously dreaming that the pronouncing of those Letters and Syllables will save them. One of the most moderate (†) and ingenious of their Writers speaks thus, *Both rising and going to bed, sitting down and rising from board, and going about any particular action or business; I would have all good Christians to say the Pater Noster. It is (says he) the only Prayer that I use at every place, at all times, and upon every accident; and instead of changing, I use often Repetition of it.* Thus speaks a Roman Catholick. Nor are all who call themselves *Protestants*, altogether free from *Superstition* in this matter. Many of them are (as Mr. Fenner speaks) in their saying the *Lords Prayer*, Guilty of *Syllabical Idolatry*. There are some make a *Charm* of those Letters and Syllables. What is it better when persons are Judged to be either innocent or guilty of the Crime of *Witchcraft*, according as they have power to say or not to say the *Lords Prayer*? Whether it was Instituted to be a *Form* or no, I am sure it was never Instituted to Try who are *Witches*: Nor can the Inability of some Persons to pronounce those words and syllables, who can pronounce any other, proceed from natural causes, but from the operation of *Demons*. Nor is there certainty in the Experiment, *Glanvil* (as I remember) confesseth that this kind of *Ordeal* is infallible. I shall take notice of but one Allegation more: It is pretended that our Saviour has *Obliged us to a Form of Words* in the Admi-

(o) *Theol. problem. p. 740.*

(†) *Montaigne Essayes. ch. 56. p. 172.*

nistration of *Baptism*, and of *the Lords Supper*: And then why not as well to a Form of words in Prayer? If it were as is objected, there is no consequence in the Argument: It does not at all follow that if there are some Forms of Divine Institution, that then the Lords Prayer was given as a Form. Moreover, although it is Lawful and Commendable in Ministring Baptism to keep to the words of Institution in *Matth. 28. 19.* Yet neither is this Commanded, but an Agreement in sense is sufficient. For it is evident, that the Apostles did not always keep to that Form. *Acts 2. 38. & 8. 16. & 10. 48. & 19 5.* This is so manifest, as that *Aquinas* confesseth it, only he supposeth that the Apostles had by Revelation a particular dispensation for their not keeping to the prescribed form. *Dr. Lightfoot* says, that when the Apostle Baptised Jews, it was in the Name of *Jesus*, because the great Controversy amongst them was, *Whether Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah*; but that when they Baptised the Gentiles where that Controversy had no footing, they Baptised into the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Greek and the Latin Church did not keep exactly to the same Form of words in their Ministring that Holy Ordinance. In the Greek Church some times they say, *I Baptise* sometimes, *Be thou Baptised*: but their usual Form was, *This Servant of Christ is Baptised*: Yea they intermixed some words of their Belief with the words of Institution in their Administring Baptism. Thus *Justin Martyr* declares, that *Washing with Water is performed in the Name of the Father of all things, and our Lord God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.* Again, he says, in the Name of *Christ who was Crucified under Pontius Pilate.* Amongst the Latins they did not keep to the Words and Syllables of the Institution. For *Cyprian* says, *In nomen, INTO the Name,* (which is most agreeable to the Original.) And in another place he does not mention Name in the Form used in Baptism, but he says, *Into the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.* This variation as to words, as long as the sense and design was the same, they thought was no variation from the Precept. Of this Judgment are *Catwright, Martinus, and Voetius* amongst our Modern Writers. The like is to be



be affirmed with respect to the *Lords Supper*. Notwithstanding the words of *Institution* are recited by three of the *Evangelists*, and by *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, nevertheless they all as to some words differ, but agree in the Substance of what is by each of them related, which shows that we are not in the Administration of the Holy Supper, limited to the use of *always the same words and Syllables*. It is clear and manifest from *Austin*, and others of the Ancients, that there was in those days a great variety used in the *Consecration* of the Elements. Now if the using the very words of *Institution* in Ministering the Sacraments is not Commanded, much less are we Commanded to use the words Expressed in our *Lords Directory for Prayer*. We conclude then, that since the use of those words as a *Form* is only a thing *Indifferent*, and not necessary, or a Commanded duty; when the case is so circumstanced that it cannot be done without *Offence*, it is rather a duty and will be most pleasing to Christ not to use it as a *Form*. It is a sound Principle which some of the *School men* have maintained. *Etiā Spiritualia non necessaria sunt fugienda, si exiis Scandalum oritur. Hof. 2. 16. 1 Cor. 10. 32.*

I shall only add, that *Biddle* (the notorious *Socinian*) having asserted, that our Saviour Prescribed the *Lords Prayer* to be used as a *Form* by his Disciples, *Dr. Owen* proposeth several *Queries* for him or any on his behalf to Answer; and amongst others these, *Whether the asserting this Form of Words to be used, has not confirmed many in their Atheistical Blaspheming the Holy Spirit of God, and His Grace in the Prayers of His People? And whether the Repetition of these words after Men have been long Praying for the things contained in them, as the manner of some is; be not so Remote from any Pretence or Colour of warrant in the Scriptures, as that it is in plain termes Ridiculous.* Thus *Dr. Owen* in his Answer to *Biddle*. p. 669.

## QUESTION XVII.

*MAY the Churches under the Presbyterian and Congregational Discipline maintain Communion with one another, notwithstanding their differing Sentiments as to Church Government?*

*Answer.* They may and ought to do so. In the Apostolical Churches there were as great and greater differences in Judgment then are those between the Brethren of these two Perswasions; who nevertheless did maintain a Christian Communion with each other, as it was their Duty to do. *Rom.* 14. 1, 2. *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. They have been *Confessors* and *Fellow-Sufferers* for bearing witness to the same Cause of Truth, which should Endear them to each other. In matters of Faith they all agree. Yea, and in the *Substantials of Church Order*. They all say, that there ought to be nothing in the Worship of God, besides what Himself has appointed. No Officers in the Church, nor Sacraments, nor Censures but what are the Institutions of Christ. A moderate Presbyterian, and a solid Congregational Man agree in so many things, and differ in so few and small things, that it would be a shame for them to divide and break Communion about them. A Man that giveth himself to reading and searching after Truth, may in a few years time, see cause to differ from himself as much as a Presbyterian and Congregational Man differ from one another. The Provincial Assembly of London in their Treatise of the Divine Rights of the Gospel Ministry, Part 1. p. 191. Speaks respectfully of the New-England Platform of Church Discipline, although they concur not therewith in some particulars, they say concerning the Ministers of New-England, that they agree with them wholly in the same Confession of Faith, and in many things of the greatest concernment in the matter of Church Discipline. And that those things wherein we differ, are not of such consequence as to make a Schism between us. They further add, that

that they can truly say as their Brethren in New-England do in the Preface to the Platform, (which Preface was written by Mr. Cotton, and approved of by other Elders) that it is far from us so to attest the Discipline of Christ as to detest the Disciples of Christ. Dr. Arrowsmith sometimes Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, notwithstanding his being a Presbyterian, calls the Ministers in New-England, *Fratres nostros jure nobis dilectissimos*; Our Brethren deservedly most dear unto us. *V. Taclica sacra* p. 115. The Gooly Learned Mr. Rutherford has declared, that if the Congregationals would all come up to what Mr. Cotton asserts in his Book of the *Keys of the Kingdom*, he would meet them half way. Mr. Baxter, not long before he went to his Everlasting Rest, said to me, If all Independents were like New-England Independents, we should soon be one. Our Congregational Brethren in England who met at the Savoy, Anno 1658. have this for the last Article of their Discipline, Churches gathered and walking according to the mind of Christ, judging other Churches (though less pure) to be true Churches, may receive to occasional Communion with them, such Members of those Churches as are credibly testified to be Godly and to live without offence. The practice of the Churches in New-England has been according to this profession. For we have received to our Communion those that have come to us with Testimonials from Presbyterian Ministers in England, and divers that have come to us from Scotland. Yea, and some French Refugees, of whose sincere Piety we have had Testimonials. And (which is more) several worthy Ministers known to be of the Presbyterian Judgment who came to us from England, particularly Mr. Morton and Mr. Bayly, were received among us with the greatest respects that the Elders and Churches in New-England could manifest towards them. And whereas they did scruple a Reordination by Imposition of hands (which is usual in these Churches) that was not urged upon them, but they were established in the Churches who Elected them with Fasting and Prayer, without any laying on of hands. Mr. Cotton not long before his departure to a better World, drew up some proposals for the Accommodation and Union of

of these two Reforming Perswasions, in which his Spirit was very much engaged. My most dear Brother *Samuel Mather* (who was well known to the Churches in *New-England* above forty years ago, and after that in *England* and in *Ireland*, where he ended his days) not long before he finished his Course, wrote a small Book which beareth the Title of *Ironicum*, or an *Essay for Union*; wherein he shows how inconsiderable the Differences are between those of the *Presbyterian* and *Congregational* Judgment, and that they may without any selling of Truth to purchase peace, mutually own and give the Right Hand of Fellowship to each other, as true Churches and Ministers of Jesus Christ, that they should lay aside all their Animosities, and remember that Golden Rule, Rom. 14. 3. *Let not him that Eateth, despise him that Eateth not, and let not him that Eateth not, judge him which Eateth; for God has received him.* So let not him who depends on the way of *Classical Subordination*, despise him that dependeth not, and let not him that dependeth not, judge him that dependeth, for the Lord has received them both.

Amongst those who go under the name of *Congregational*, there is a variety of apprehension in some *Disciplinary Controversies*. Some of them have thought that no Children should be admitted to Baptism whose Parents are not admitted to the Lord's Table. This was the opinion of our Learned Mr. *Chauncey*, who was many years President of the Colledge, and of Mr. *Davenport*, and some few others of the first Ministers in these Churches: But Mr. *Cotton*, my Father *Mather*, Mr. *Norton*, Mr. *Rogers*, Mr. *Mitchel*, and the generality of our *New-England* Divines were for a greater Latitude as to the subject of Baptism. Some esteem none to be of the *Visible Church*, excepting those that belong to *Particular Churches*: So Mr. *Hooker*, Mr. *Stone*, and most of our Ministers. But in this the generality of *Congregationals* in *England* vary from them. They suppose that all the Men in the world, who deserve the name of *Christians*, or that make a profession of the true Religion, and do not destroy that profession by any Error in Judgment, or Scandal in Conversation, are the *Catholick Visible Church*, of which number there are many who are not in full Communion

munion with any particular *Instituted Church*. Some limit Baptism to Membership in a particular Church. So has it been with us in *New-England* for the most part. But other *Congregationals* differ from us in this point. Dr. Goodwin has strenuously asserted, that a *Particular Church* is the Subject of that Ordinance of the *Lords Supper*, but not of *Baptism*. And of this Judgment were Dr. Owen and Mr. Greenhil, as both of them did many years since in Letters I received from them, signify to me; and Dr. Owen in divers of his printed Books, declares that he was so perswaded. So that they who go under the name of *Congregational* must withdraw Communion from one another as well as from *Presbyterians*, if differing sentiments about *Disciplinary Questions*, be a sufficient ground for disunion and separation. Dr. Ames was *Congregational*, highly approving of the Churches in *New-England*; and purposing to have ended his days amongst them. On his Death-bed (as one that was then with him has publickly testified) he declared that if there were any Churches in the world whom God would own, they were such as those in *New-England*. And altho' *Gangrana* says, that then it was a mercy that Learned Ames lived no longer, better Men then he will not say so. Dr. Twiss was *Presbyterian*, nevertheless, there was an Endear'dness between Ames and him. Mr. Marshal and Mr. Strong Loved as Brethren notwithstanding the former was *Presbyterian*, and the Latter *Congregational*: Two Lustres of years are now expiring, since the Ministers in London of both these perswasions declared their readiness to *Walk together according to the Gospel Rules of Communion of Churches*. Would all that pretend to the Name of *Presbyterian* observe the Articles of that Union, the *Congregationals* in *New-England* would readily give them the Right Hand of Fellowship. Especially if they would practice according to some *Essential Articles* therein; particularly that Article which declares, that none shall be admitted to all special Ordinances but such as are not only free from Scandal in their lives, but persons of visible Godliness, making a credible profession of cordial Subjection to Christ. And that Article which says, We are most willing and ready to give an account of our Church

*Church proceeding to each other when desired. Also that Article wherein they say, we agree that in order to concord, and in weighty and difficult cases, it is needful and according to the mind of Christ, that the Ministers of several Churches be consulted and advised with about such Matters. Is not the Embodying into a Church State a weighty matter? Is not the Calling and Ordaining a Minister a Weighty Matter? They that shall do such things without advising with Neighbour Churches or Ministers, must think of some other name whereby they may be distinguished. For it is a very vain thing for them to pretend to be either Presbyterian or Congregational: when the Fundamental Articles of their Union are manifestly transgressed and violated. For my own part, I have many years desired to see an Union of these two Reformed Parties.*

When I was last at London, I did that little I was Capable of, to promote that Union which has been happily Effected. And I count it one of the greatest Mercies of my Life, that ever I was at all instrumental in so Blessed a work. In several points, wherein those of the Congregational persuasion differ from the other, I am satisfied in my own Judgment, that they have Truth on their side; nevertheless, there have been as Eminent Men for Piety and Learning of the Presbyterians persuasion, as any the World has in this last Age been Blessed with; whom it is an affliction at all to differ from. I therefore finish with the words of a Great Man among us, (z) who speaking of some Presbyterian Divines, thus Expresseth himself, *Those Godly Learned Divines we do so highly Esteem, and so deeply Reverence in the Lord, that were the cause our own, and not the Lords, we should rather let it fall, then defend it, by Opposition to the Grave Judgment of such Holy Saints.*

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(z) Mr. Cotton. way of the Churches. p. 84.



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